



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 102670**

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

**Russell Road**

**Wimbledon, SW19 1QL**

**Inspection date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs D O'Brien

**Headteacher:** Mrs M Macdona

**Inspectors:** Mrs A Oddy

Ms A Rundle

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331

**Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes**



### Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a voluntary aided, two form entry Catholic primary school. It is situated in the Merton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is maintained by Merton Local Authority. The principal parish which the school serves is St Winefride's, Wimbledon. Significant numbers of pupils come from the parishes of Christ the King, Wimbledon Park and St Joseph's, Colliers Wood. Many pupils attend Sacred Heart Church, Edgehill and the Polish Chaplaincy in Balham. 98% of pupils are baptised Catholics.

The average weekly proportion of 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 467. 38% of pupils are of White British heritage, 33% are from 'Any Other White' backgrounds, with the remaining percentage of pupils coming from a number of other ethnic heritages. 51% of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL). The percentage of pupils who have Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) is 10%. This is below the national average. Of these pupils, five have an Education or Health Care Plan (EHC). Pupil premium funding is received for 6% of pupils. This is well below the national average.



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's Primary is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- it is a warm and welcoming school offering a high standard of education within a happy Catholic community. Its attractive learning environment clearly proclaims its Catholic identity. The Headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear shared vision for the school. They demonstrate a purposeful commitment to continuous school improvement and to ensuring that the strong Catholic ethos permeates all areas of school life. Pupils feel safe and happy and enjoy coming to school. They are kind and considerate to each other and know that they have a responsibility 'To be the best that we can be' in all respects. Parents feel part of the school community and value the Catholic Education it offers;
- the Catholic life of the school embraces all members of the school community. Governors, school leaders and staff are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and personal development of every pupil. Pastoral care is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others, in their school community and beyond. They are active in fundraising for those in need. Good links with other Catholic schools, the deanery and the diocese reflect that the school and its pupils are part of the wider Catholic family;
- prayer and worship opportunities nurture pupils' spiritual growth and their knowledge of the celebrations and traditions of the Church. Pupils are encouraged to plan and lead prayer and worship. They act with reverence and respect, knowing that these are special times and form part of their relationship with God. Prayer is central to school life. Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and at ease with composing and using their own prayers;
- standards in Religious Education are high. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' work is beautifully presented, indicating pupils' pride in their work. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and the variety of cross curricular links that enhance the curriculum. They can reflect on their learning and demonstrate a high standard of religious literacy. They recognise the importance of Religious Education to their own lives.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue with the school's already identified focus on further developing assessment procedures to accommodate the transition from levels to age related expectations.
- Ensure that the school website and newsletters fully reflect the school's strong Catholic identity and rich Catholic life.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective is the school in providing Catholic Education?

1

### Catholic life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school.

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school.

1

### Religious Education

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

### Collective worship

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' collective worship.

1

The quality of provision for collective worship.

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship.

1

## CATHOLIC LIFE

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.**

- The mission statement is central to school life. Pupils understand they have a responsibility to 'be the best that we can be' and can relate this to their mission of service to others and to school life.
- Pupils know that they contribute to the ethos of their school, that they can make suggestions for improvement and that they will be listened to. One said, "The teachers are kind and really listen to you. I feel I could really talk to them if I had a problem."
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being part of their school family. They are caring and considerate towards each other. They know it is important to be inclusive and forgiving and appreciate being part of the caring community that is St Mary's School. They feel safe in school and know that any worries will be swiftly attended to. A pupil said, "We work as a real community team. We are always looking out for each other and helping each other."
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others and of their responsibility towards them. They are active in supporting a range of charities. These include HCPT, NSPCC and CAFOD.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility. They are conscientious in these duties, seeing them as an opportunity to be of service to others and their school. They are able to relate this to their sense of vocation and the school's mission. Examples include playground buddies, house captains, singing leaders and young leaders. A pupil chaplaincy group offers pupils the opportunity to make significant contributions to the school's Catholic life. A parent said, "I find the school to be a positive and supportive environment. Older children are caring of younger children and considerate of those around."
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school was exemplary throughout this inspection. Pupils are considerate and courteous to each other and to adults. They are welcoming and helpful to visitors.
- Pupils know they are part of the wider Catholic community. The school has strong links with St Winefride's Parish. The Parish Priest is a member of the governing body and is a regular visitor to the school. School celebrations, such as the Easter Pageant, are held at the church and parishioners are invited to school occasions and celebrations. The school also participates in deanery events with the other Catholic schools and in diocesan events. The last Section 48 inspection identified strengthening links with the school's other feeder parishes as an area for development. The school has addressed this by inviting priests from neighbouring parishes to say Mass and take part in the Reconciliation services. This was recognised and appreciated by a parent who wrote, "Over the last three years the school has made huge strides in this area, with the priest from Christ the King often celebrating Mass in school."
- Pupils are also given opportunities to work with other schools and organisations in the community. They speak appreciatively of these opportunities, enjoying playing a part in the wider community. Good links with Catholic secondary schools contribute to the continuity of Catholic education and facilitate transition for pupils.



- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) together with Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Circle Time help pupils to develop their understanding of relationships and sexual development. Teaching is in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church. The school follows the 'Journey in Love' scheme for RSE. Parents are invited to view materials and come into school to discuss any concerns.
- Parents appreciate the Catholic life of the school and the education it offers. An exceptionally large number of questionnaires distributed as part of this inspection were returned; these were overwhelmingly positive. A parent commented, "St Mary's is a fantastic school which is inclusive of all children. It is a school which fully embraces all families within its community – school and church / parish. The children are constantly being guided spiritually, morally and socially on a daily basis within the school community."
- A book in the school entrance hall features memories from Year 6 pupils about to leave the school and provides evidence of the school's contribution to the holistic development of its pupils. A pupil wrote, "I will never forget what the school has done for me. Now I really am the best that I can be." And another commented, "St Mary's will stay in my heart forever."

**The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.**

- The mission statement is central to the life of the school. It informs all school policy and practice. The school may now wish to consider revisiting it on an annual basis with all members of the school community, reflecting its importance to the life of the school.
- The Catholic identity of the school is clear in its well-kept learning environment featuring attractive displays and artefacts and in the excellent and supportive relationships between members of the school community. Beautiful displays in the entrance hall celebrate the First Holy Communion pupils and the memories of Year Six pupils about to leave the school.
- Staff form a cohesive team, committed to working together and to providing guidance and support for the pupils in their care. The school is a supportive and joyful community.
- The school's Catholic life and curriculum reflects its commitment to the care and development of the whole child and to foster responsibility to the community and the environment.
- Chaplaincy provision includes the Parish Priest as school chaplain and the pupil chaplaincy group. They are a strong team supporting, promoting and enriching the school's Catholic life.
- Pastoral care for pupils is excellent. Adult mentors and an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) provide support for vulnerable pupils. Playground buddies help pupils resolve difficulties, facilitate inclusion and help pupils to enjoy playtimes.
- Pastoral care also extends to pupils' families and to staff, illustrating the school's care for the wellbeing of all members of its community. School leaders promote work/life balance and have worked to reduce staff workload; for example, by adapting the marking policy. An employee assistance helpline has been made available to staff and has been used and appreciated.
- The school welcomes and celebrates its diverse community. Celebrating Cultures / Welcome Week ensures that all feel welcome, culminating in an international welcome evening where families share food, music and the joy of being together.



**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.**

- Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and to ensuring that the Catholic life of the school nurtures the academic, moral and spiritual development of its pupils.
- School leaders and governors promote the Catholic ethos at all times, using the school's 'To be the best that we can be' to illustrate the school's values to be a follower of Christ 'to live, to love, to learn and to serve'. They are excellent role models and active participants in the school's Catholic life. A parent wrote, "They (senior leaders and staff) act as role models every day by actions that each student can learn from."
- The school actively fosters its links with the local parish. Several governors are also parishioners and the Parish Priest is a member of the governing body.
- Deanery and diocesan links show school leaders' commitment and involvement with the wider Catholic community. The Headteacher attends the annual Diocesan Headteachers' Conference and the school is an active member of the Merton Deanery Collaboration.
- Governors play an active part in the school's Catholic life. Regular governor visits including Governor Mornings, attendance at school liturgies and celebrations, and reports from the Headteacher and subject leader ensure that they are well informed and able to fulfil their role of support and challenge.
- Parents are actively included in the school's Catholic life and are appreciative of this, enjoying their role in this warm and welcoming Catholic community. A parent wrote, "St Mary's is a fantastic school which is inclusive of all children. It is a school which fully embraces all families within its community."
- It is clear that the school has a strong Catholic identity and a rich Catholic life. Leaders and governors should now ensure that this is comprehensively reflected and promoted on the school's website and in school newsletters.





## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- Pupils make very good progress in Religious Education and achieve well. Standards of attainment are high and reflect those in other core subjects. Almost all pupils achieve or exceed age related expectations by the end of Key Stage 2, with a significant number of pupils working at greater depth. All groups of pupils, including SEND pupils, make good progress.
- Pupils are keen to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. They are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively.
- Pupils demonstrate high standards of religious literacy. They enjoy responding to challenging questioning and use reflection and their own questions to explore their learning and deepen their understanding. A variety of learning strategies and styles, including cross curricular links, enrich curriculum teaching of Religious Education.
- In the lessons observed as part of this inspection, behaviour for learning was excellent. Pupils were engaged and attentive and keen to give of their best.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education. They know it is a special time and that Religious Education is an important subject in their school and in their own lives. They are able to talk confidently about their learning and how they can apply it to life in school and beyond. One said, "It helps you to understand people better," and another said, "It helps me to be a better person."
- The quality of pupils' work in class and in written work, is of a high standard. Pupils clearly take pride in their work and enjoy describing it and explaining how it was achieved.
- Parents recognise and appreciate the high standard of Religious Education the school offers and its impact on the pupils' enjoyment and standards of learning. One commented, "It is evident that Religious Education is given the highest priority," and another wrote, "There is no single week that my daughter is not discussing religious topics she has heard at school."

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Four lessons, across three key stages, were observed as part of this inspection. School monitoring indicates that all lessons in Religious Education are good or better and this is in line with the findings of this inspection. Lessons were well planned, with activities differentiated as appropriate. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and used questioning effectively. Almost all pupils were interested, enthusiastic, keen to contribute and to participate. In the best lessons, pace was always excellent and pupils were fully engaged throughout. Behaviour for learning was excellent. Other adults in the classroom supported pupils effectively and sensitively.
- In early years, an assistant was observed making good use of a tablet to record pupils' contributions to discussion.
- Marking is regular, affirmative and shows a dialogue between teacher and pupil. Pupils appreciate that this helps them to progress in their learning. Pupils valued self-assessment as well as teacher feedback and were also familiar with peer assessment.





- Regular assessment informs pupil tracking and enables the school to monitor progress. The school is currently adapting its assessment procedures to accommodate the change from using levels to using age-related expectations. Diocesan guidance and deanery collaboration are being used to facilitate this. The school has identified this as an area for continued development and this is in line with the findings of this inspection.
- Training for staff has been provided in staff meetings and has included updates in the teaching and assessment of Religious Education provided by the subject leader, following his attendance at diocesan courses and meetings. Support is provided for teachers who are not Catholic or who are new to Catholic education.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Curriculum letters are sent out termly to inform parents of the topics and themes currently being studied in Religious Education. A weekly learning update is sent out to them containing the learning objectives for the Religious Education lessons so that they can discuss the themes with their children. They are also invited to assemblies celebrating Religious Education topics and themes. Parents appreciate this. One wrote, "I am informed of what my daughter will be learning in the week ahead, and she talks about the things she has learned."
- The teaching of other faiths is well established, with Judaism and one other faith being taught each year. This is enriched by visits to other places of worship and speakers from other faiths. A parent wrote, "It is brilliant that my daughter tells me about Buddhism and could recognise a Hindu temple when we drove past." A Multi Faith Week builds on and celebrates the teaching of other faiths in Religious Education, encouraging tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others. A parent commented, "It is nice to know the children are taught about other religious beliefs and to respect them."

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.**

- The Religious Education curriculum is based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012). 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' is the primary scheme used and is enhanced by cross curricular links. Curriculum time allocation is 10% in both key stages and is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The curriculum is well resourced, with Religious Education receiving an appropriate budget share. The Religious Education subject leader is also the Assistant Headteacher and is a member of the senior leadership team.
- Religious Education is effectively led and managed by the subject leader, supported by the Headteacher. The subject leader shows passion and commitment to his role and to promoting good practice and high outcomes in Religious Education throughout the school. He attends diocesan meetings and training and cascades this information to all staff. He serves as a Eucharistic Minister at school Masses, providing pupils with a good role model. He is also the strategic lead for Religious Education across the Merton Deanery schools and has led training and meetings for other Religious Education subject leaders to improve practice across the group.
- Leaders and governors are committed to promoting and providing a high standard of Religious Education throughout the school. They have a comprehensive system of monitoring, including



learning walks, lesson observations, book scrutiny and planning scrutiny. This feeds into school self-evaluation and informs development planning.

- Governor visits include Governor Mornings and the more informal Mingles ensuring that they are a visible presence in the school and that they experience at first hand the standards and practice in the school. Governors interviewed as part of this inspection knew their school well, were aware of standards and the Religious Education curriculum and effectively fulfilled their role of support and challenge.
- The Parish Priest provides valued and valuable support for the Religious Education curriculum as well as support and guidance for staff, pupils and their families.
- Assessment is effectively used to monitor pupil progress and standards in Religious Education and to plan for improvement.

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- St Mary's provides a wide range of prayer and collective worship opportunities. Pupils value these and respond very positively.
- Pupils are actively involved in leading and preparing prayer and worship. Inspectors observed the house captains leading prayer in the playground before school. They did so with respect and confidence, knowing that this was an important part of the school day and pupils responded accordingly.
- Pupils in the chaplaincy group help to prepare, plan and contribute to school worship. They fulfil a variety of roles as part of this group. They commented on the recent 'Spirited Arts' competition, featuring art linked to Religious Education, in which they had acted as judges.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its feasts and seasons and readily describe how these are celebrated in school.
- Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are also at ease composing and contributing their own prayers. A school prayer book includes prayers from pupils, staff and parents. Pupils' prayers feature in every classroom and around the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to use different prayer styles, including reflection. Class prayer books and spiritual journals provide beautifully presented examples of pupils' prayers throughout the year.
- Pupils know that prayer is important to them and to the life of their school. They recognise that it is an opportunity to deepen their relationship with God and that prayer can help them and others.
- Classes responsible for preparing Masses meet with the Priest to choose the readings, music and prayers. Drama is often used to enhance the Gospel reading. Pupils are also very much involved in planning and leading class worship.
- Pupils know it is important to show respect for the beliefs and faith practices of others and relate this to their study of other faiths in Religious Education. They also know that it is important to include and welcome all to their school celebrations. Although very few pupils are not baptised Catholics, the school's inclusive approach welcomes all.
- Many prayer focus areas, prayer spaces and displays reflect the importance of prayer to the members of the school community and inspire them to reflection and prayers. The school should now ensure that all classes' prayer focus areas and prayer books are of the standard of the best examples.



**The quality of provision for collective worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- Leaders and governors are committed to high quality provision for collective worship and prayer for the whole school community. Careful planning and good resources help to ensure a rich and meaningful programme to nurture pupils' spiritual development and strengthen the school community, uniting it in prayer.
- A whole school assembly led by the Headteacher formed part of this inspection. Pupil singing leaders sang beautifully as the school gathered and joined in with them. The assembly was interactive with pupils responding enthusiastically and thoughtfully to questions relating to Faith and Trust. The assembly was directly related to Sunday's Gospel and illustrated it in a practical way, with a message for pupils' own lives.
- Prayer is important to all members of the school community. Staff meetings and governors' meetings start with prayer and prayer is woven throughout the school day for staff and pupils. During this inspection, prayer led by a member of staff formed part of the morning briefing, as staff took a moment to reflect and ask for God's guidance throughout the day ahead.
- School leaders model good practice and support other staff in leading prayer and worship, developing the staff team in high quality provision.
- Governors attend Masses and liturgies at school and at church as part of their monitoring role as well as participating as members of the school community.
- The Parish Priest and school leaders are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver collective worship in order to provide meaningful and prayerful experiences for the school community.
- The school's collective worship includes parishioners and parents, encouraging them to join the school in worship. The school should now ensure that the wealth of worship opportunities offered is promoted and celebrated on the school website.
- Sacramental preparation provision includes support for pupils making their First Holy Communion, recognising that this is an important step in their spiritual journey. Reconciliation services are offered in Advent and Lent, with a number of priests from local parishes helping to develop the pupils' sense of being part of a wider Catholic community.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- Leaders and governors have extensive knowledge in planning and delivering high quality collective worship.
- They ensure that the Church's liturgical year, feasts and seasons form an integral part of the school calendar and that the school community is united in celebrating these, so that they have become highlights of the school year.
- Pupils speak highly of school celebrations and are keen to play their part. Parents are very appreciative and show this by excellent attendance at these events and their feedback comments. A parent wrote, "We are encouraged to attend school Mass and join in spiritually within school."



- Leaders' self-evaluation and development planning takes into collective workshop. Areas for development identified by the school include, developing the role of pupils in leading worship and encouraging more use of prayer spaces in the school and school grounds.
- Leaders and governors are dedicated to ensuring high quality provision of collective worship and prayer opportunities to nurture and develop the spiritual life of the pupils. This is recognised by parents. One wrote, "The children are constantly being guided spiritually, morally and socially on a daily basis within the school community."

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