



# DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 137958

St James' Catholic Primary School

Maybury Close

Petts Wood, BR5 1BL

Inspection date: 09 May 2018

Chair of Governors: Mrs Mary Hutchinson

Headteacher: Mrs Lisa Weeks

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Mrs Bernadette Long

## EDUCATION COMMISSION

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**DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**



## Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St James' is a one form entry Catholic Academy and is a member of the Bromley Catholic Schools Trust. It is situated in the Bromley Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school is oversubscribed by 3:1 with waiting lists for every year group. The principal parishes, which the school serves are St James, Petts Wood and St Swithin, Bromley Common. 100% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 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 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 218. The majority of the school's intake comes from average and above average social economic backgrounds. 18% of pupils at the school have English as an additional language (EAL) with the main languages being Polish, Spanish and Chinese. Although few continue to be at the early stage of its acquisition this number is rising reflecting changes in the area demographics. Another trend has been an increase in children from ethnic minorities. Currently 39% of pupils are from ethnic minorities including those from any other white background.

The numbers eligible for both pupil premium and pupil premium plus are well below national average. There has been a slight increase in the number of children identified as needing support for Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) throughout the school. This currently sits at 9%.

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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St James' is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The school's Christian mission is at the heart of everything, bringing to life its core purpose to provide an excellent Catholic education for the pupils. The whole school community is rightly proud of its school and how well it does.
- The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The issue identified at the last inspection regarding the teaching of other faiths has been fully addressed and the school has continued to build on its significant strengths. Central to this capacity to improve is the inspirational Headteacher whose clarity of vision and capacity for achievement underpins the school's drive for excellence. In this objective she is most ably supported by a talented Deputy and a strong and hardworking school team including the Governing Body, Parish Priest and staff. The overwhelming support of parents is witnessed by such comments as: "My husband and I have always considered St James' as a fundamental partner in our daughter's Catholic upbringing. Since the Headteacher and Religious Education coordinator started we have noticed an even greater effort to increase the opportunities for an even more kaleidoscopic approach to what Catholic faith can mean to the children. For example, the RE Ambassadors."
- The quality of Religious Education is outstanding. The quality of teaching and learning overall is outstanding. Lessons are challenging and encourage pupils to think about their faith and how to live their lives. The school has been successful in creating an authentic and distinctive character which allows the pupils to develop fully in their humanity, achieve well academically and feel happy, safe and well-cared for. The school is aware of the need to further develop its teaching strategies.
- The quality of collective worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school and is given the highest priority. Guided by staff, pupils are increasingly confident in planning and leading prayer and worship and all pupils act with reverence and respect.

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

With no significant areas for improvement the school should;

- Further develop the role of the Religious Education subject leader by reviewing the management of her time in order to enable her to successfully implement new assessment procedures and more detailed monitoring, in line with assessment without levels.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is 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

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## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

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

- St James' is a vibrant and exceptionally well-run school that maximises every opportunity to provide pupils with the broadest range of opportunities, spiritually, academically, musically and through sports. It is an encompassing, inclusive school that serves its community exceptionally well.
- Pupils at St James' are proud of their religious identity and make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life which has a very high priority across the school. They are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos and are actively involved, taking on responsibilities very enthusiastically, such as RE Ambassadors, Student Council members, Garden Council members, Play Leaders, Playground Buddies and having school responsibilities in Year 6. Year 5 are to have a day of training in June to become Peer Mediators. These responsibilities empower the pupils to understand their responsibilities of social justice and allows them to put Gospel Values into practise and promote the school's ethos both within the school and the wider community.
- The school uses the 'Wednesday Word' to share the Gospel with the school community. The Student Council decided to create a competition for the word search section so that they could promote the 'Wednesday Word' further throughout the school. Recently the pupils completed a questionnaire on its impact. Their comments showed that they found it very useful and it helped their understanding of the Gospel read at Mass. Parents likewise welcomed the support it offered them at home.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school community. They know that they should stand up against injustice when they see it and will approach staff to discuss ways in which they could help and support their local and wider community. They are then supported in arranging charitable events. The pupils prepare and lead fundraising events for charities of their choice, including games, cake sales and sponsored runs. This gives them a sense of their wider responsibility. Recently the pupils wanted to raise money for a local boy whom they had read about in a local newspaper. He needed a new wheelchair and had to raise the money for it. They raised money to support him and were pleased to meet him when he visited the school with his mother, to show them his new wheelchair. Another example of pupils initiating social action events occurred when pupils wanted to support two peers at St James' with Type 1 diabetes by raising awareness of the condition. In a similar way Year 4 asked if they could fundraise for and support Autism week recently.
- The school works with CAFOD, The Passage, The Cardinal Hume Centre, The St Vincent De Paul Society and The Catholic Children's Society. All of these organisations have visited the school to present assemblies so that the pupils know their role in society



and what their fundraising is supporting. As well as this, each year they collect for the Royal British Legion, the Red Cross and the RNLI in addition to the many other charities that the pupils nominate. The pupils lead assemblies on the charities, explaining to the younger pupils the importance of the charity and where the money raised will go.

### **The quality of provision of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding**

- The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The school's vision of 'We believe in you and your ability to succeed' is set out in the Mission Statement and this underpins everything that the school does. The values of 'Faith in Action, Working Together and Walking in the Footsteps of Christ' are embedded throughout the school. They give each child a clear understanding of the educational mission of the Church. All members of the school community had a role in contributing to the Mission Statement: parents, governors and pupils and this ensures a shared vision, commitment and sense of ownership.
- Governors and staff have high expectations with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos. This is reflected in the excellent self-evaluation provided for this inspection. It reflected a clear understanding of the strengths of the school. All staff are involved in nurturing and living out the school's mission statement and are fully committed to providing every opportunity to ensure all pupils "Live life to the full."
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels as evidenced by the quality of relationships and sense of unity that exists both among and between staff and pupils. There is a strong supportive PTA. The school is a happy and prayerful community and its Catholic character is effectively reflected through displays and artefacts in the learning environment and the creation of sacred spaces around the school, especially the prayer room. Clear policies and procedures are in place which provide the highest levels of pastoral support to pupils and there is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy.
- Catholic principles and values also underpin behaviour and relationship policies resulting in a strong shared vision for the Catholic life of the school. Effective training supports staff commitment and the physical resources of the school are used very well to help achieve priorities set.
- As a parent wrote, "The staff at St James' go above and beyond what we would expect with respect to their duty of care. School feels like an extension of home rather than just school. All are made to feel welcome whether Headteacher, teacher, parent or student."

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

- The Catholic ethos is clearly at the heart of all that motivates the school leadership. The Headteacher, ably supported by the Deputy, make their expectations regarding the Catholicity of the school clear and as a result, all aspects of Catholic life from



display, to behaviour and relationships between staff and pupils are consistently applied to a high standard across the whole school.

- All Governors are subject links and undertake termly school visits. They meet with subject leaders, attend school events and collective worship. Religious Education is an item on every Governor meeting agenda. Governance of the school is of a very high order. Governors are skilled and knowledgeable and are regular visitors to the school and if they are visiting are invited to eat lunch with the pupils. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. They know the school well, understand the data fully and monitor continually. They act as a critical friend in holding leaders to account and undertake training in order to develop their knowledge.
- The School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP) continuously focuses on the development of the Catholic mission of the school, ensuring that the Catholic ethos remains a key priority clearly identifying improvement priorities for Religious Education. Upholding the Catholic life of the school is the driving force behind every decision made by the leadership team and governing body. This is reflected in the way resources are allocated and the school's priorities for raising standards.
- The governors support the Religious Education Subject Leader/Deputy in her role, ensuring she has time to attend relevant training, work with Religious Education advisors and with other Religious Education subject leaders. She produces a Religious Education Action Plan annually which is shared with governors. She reports back to the Headteacher, governors and the leadership team.
- St James' is a fully inclusive school and actively promotes that each person is valued as an individual. There is an unremitting drive to ensure all pupils achieve their potential in all subjects.
- A parent responded on their questionnaire, "From hearing comments from our children they are encouraged to ask questions of anything that they do not understand. Their opinions are listened to and valued. To understand their faith they question what they are taught."

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

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

- As a result of good assessment procedures, staff are aware of their pupils' prior learning, making progress easier to plan for. Good open-ended questioning was observed in all classes. This enables pupils of all abilities to be challenged in their thinking and helps them acquire a deeper understanding of their work in Religious Education.
- Use of cross curricular links ensured lessons were relevant and the use of music, role play, hot-seating, video, and drama are well used as teaching strategies. Pupils indicated they would like even more opportunities in these areas.
- Teachers differentiate tasks well in order to meet a variety of pupil needs. Support staff are highly skilled and provide excellent care and support to pupils. They are deployed effectively and show sensitivity to pupils' needs.
- Through a very effective marking system, pupils are generally involved in evaluating how well they achieve and understand how to improve their work. They demonstrate excellent religious literacy from Early Years through to Year 6, appropriate for their age and development.
- In discussions with inspectors, pupils indicated that they enjoy their Religious Education lessons.
- The inspectors noted a comment from the Diocesan advisor, stating; "The school has a robust system in place for tracking the children. Goal Sharing enables the children to have involvement in their learning and makes clear their progress and their areas for development. This is exceptionally good practice." The inspectors likewise identified this and can validate the statement as providing strong evidence that the school is an exemplar in this regard.

### The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding

- The quality of teaching in Religious Education is outstanding and ensures that a majority of pupils make at least good and in some cases outstanding progress. Teachers in all key stages have high expectations and plan challenging and focused learning activities. They ensure that a range of teaching and learning styles are used and this together with quality resources results in very good learning.
- Teachers use their confident subject knowledge well. Teaching observed was at least good with a number of outstanding elements.
- The school follows 'The Way, The Truth and The life' scheme and this enables pupils to become involved in discussion and debate around relevant themes whilst ensuring



that they are familiar with Bible stories throughout the liturgical year. The scheme is appropriately supplemented with additional materials. Pupils and teachers are passionate about Religious Education and are aspirational.

- Teachers ensure that they check pupils learning throughout lessons and are able to adapt their teaching when appropriate, ensuring that all pupils have the best opportunities to learn and make progress. They use praise effectively to provide encouragement and support for all pupils throughout the school. Regular and accurate assessment takes place and the school ensures that very good moderation strategies are in place both within and beyond the school.
- The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and there are examples of focused marking. Pupils are involved in evaluating their learning, helping them to know how to improve their work and what the next steps are in their learning. Pupils' work is moderated within the school and also as part of the Deanery schools cluster.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is outstanding. The Headteacher together with staff team ensures that excellent monitoring systems are in place and this together with well written action plans clearly identify planned improvements in outcomes for pupils.
- Curriculum planning is imaginative and stimulating and ensures that all pupils are able to access their learning. Religious Education fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

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

- Due to strong leadership in Religious Education, there is a shared common purpose amongst those involved in its teaching. Leadership is informed by a high level of expertise and vision and inspires confidence and whole-hearted commitment from pupils and colleagues.
- The school has greatly developed its multi-faith curriculum. Each class has a scheme of work, focusing on one different faith each year. This is followed throughout the school and directly teaches pupils about the practices of other religions. This is revisited throughout the year and continues to build on their prior knowledge. They study Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. In each classroom there is a bank of resources that allows pupils to fully engage with artefacts from other faiths. In order to enrich the pupils' knowledge of other faiths, Year 2 are visiting a Jewish Synagogue and Year 4 are visiting a Hindu place of worship.
- The Religious Education provision provides pupils with the opportunity to explore other cultures and faiths and promotes British Values. The school uses outside agencies such as CAFOD, The British Council and members of other faith communities to further develop the pupils' understanding of the lives of people from other faiths and cultures. One week each term is set aside to study other faiths and throughout the year speakers are invited from other faiths to lead assemblies and



workshops. The pupils respond very respectfully to other faith practitioners and show a great deal of interest in learning about different religions. The school is also developing the pupils' understanding of Christian unity, whereby each class will focus on another Christian denomination. This culminates in a whole school Mass to coincide with Christian unity week.

- A parent commented, "The philosophy lessons in which our children participate have been invaluable in teaching them moral values and respecting people around them. It takes a loving community to raise a Catholic child and we are blessed with this."
- Good links are forged with other agencies, the wider community and the local parish to provide a range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement with the subject.
- Deanery links provide opportunities for external moderation and staff development. The curriculum enables pupils to gain first hand experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic church and of other world faiths.

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

### How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life is outstanding

- St James' is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding.
- Pupils lead and prepare collective worship with enthusiasm and confidence. Under the guidance of staff and with welcome support from the parish, they have become increasingly skilled in using a variety of ways of praying and in using scripture, drama, religious artefacts and hymns in their worship. Pupils throughout the school know what constitutes the various elements of worship.
- Respect for different faiths is reflected in the inclusive manner in which pupils prepare for liturgy. This contributes very positively to their spiritual and moral development, which is outstanding.
- Pupils understand there are different forms of liturgies and have a good understanding of the Church's seasons and liturgical year. They are able to prepare for these celebrations in relation to their age and ability. The new RE Ambassador scheme has allowed pupils to be actively involved in the planning stage of collective worship. RE Ambassadors meet with the Religious Education Subject Leader to contribute ideas or to help develop collective worship. They write the bidding prayers for school and class Masses and also help the different year groups proclaim the word using the Wednesday Word resources.
- The provision of music to support collective worship is a strength of the school. The school choir is outstanding as was the instrumental trio who accompanied pupils entering the hall for assembly.
- The Parish Priest is supportive of and a regular visitor to the school, his contributions to both collective worship and the wider life of the school are greatly valued by all. School parish links are very strong and mutually supportive through the chaplaincy role he provides to the St James community.

### The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life is outstanding

- Prayer and acts of collective worship are given the highest priority and have become a key part of every day and every school celebration, providing inspiration for staff and pupils.
- There is a clear policy for collective worship and a good range of structures to ensure that it is frequent, regular and inclusive.



- Collective worship has a very clear structure and purpose and there are a variety of opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together. It is carefully planned and resourced to enhance the worship experiences throughout the liturgical year. Pupils and adults praying together is a daily experience with parents and other adults welcomed into this prayerful community.
- Adults are passionate about ensuring that collective worship is of the highest quality and take every opportunity to model high quality liturgies: themes chosen reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical year.
- Parents, parishioners and governors are given further opportunities to share in the spiritual life of the school through various acts of collective worship and celebrations.

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life is outstanding**

- Leaders are models of outstanding practice. Liturgical and spiritual development is seen as a priority. This expert knowledge has been shared with staff to empower them to provide quality collective worship for pupils.
- Staff share outstanding practice and support each other in order to further improve the worship experience for the pupils at St James'. They have benefited from Diocesan training as well as high quality induction training when starting at the school.
- Views of pupils and their families are regularly sought and guide future developments alongside monitoring and evaluating by the senior leadership team and governors.
- A parent summed up writing, "We have been very pleased to see how such a caring Catholic ethos has been embedded in everyday school life. Our child in Reception comes home recalling meanings from Bible stories, singing uplifting hymns and generally telling us how much he loves school. St James' promotes kindness and friendship within a strong and spiritual Christian environment."

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