



## 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 100826

St Francis Catholic Primary School  
Friary Road  
Peckham, London  
SE15 1RQ

Inspection date: 22 January 2015

Chair of Governors:

Rev Fr Peter Ryman

Headteacher:

Mrs Carol Molloy and

Mrs Ros Atkinson

Inspectors:

Mr Stephen Beck

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# SECTION 48

# Introduction

## Description of the school

St Francis Catholic Primary is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Camberwell Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark Local Authority. The principal parish which the school serves is Our Lady of Sorrows, Peckham with only a very small proportion of pupils, less than 2%, from other neighbouring parishes. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 77%. This figure has reduced from the time of the last inspection due to an increase in pupil places across a range of school provision in the local area. The school is also catering for a small proportion of pupils of other non-Christian faiths at 4% and some with no faith affiliation at 4%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all key stages.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 423. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above average. Around 15% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The majority of these have speech and language disorders. The school is situated within a very diverse community with 71% of pupils from West African origins. A total of 96.5% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with 81% being EAL pupils.

Date of previous inspection:

25/02/2010

Overall Grade:

2

## Key for inspection grades

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

St Francis School is a highly effective, distinctly Catholic school that provides an outstanding Catholic education for its pupils. It places equal value on academic achievement and the pupils' personal faith development. It is a caring community in which, from the point of first contact and as soon as you enter the school, a strong Catholic ethos is clearly evident. The drive to develop the whole child and to nurture the individual is embedded in the school culture. Pupils respect all members of the community as equally valuable. Very strong liaison with parents and the parish further nurtures and nourishes this provision. The established partnership of two Headteachers job sharing works exceedingly well with their individual strengths securing additional breadth to the school's leadership team.

The pre-inspection self-evaluation form accurately identified areas of strength and areas for development. The school has a strong focused management in place and an able dedicated staff. This team is significantly enhanced by a talented subject leader who is proactive in the ongoing development of her subject area. Governors are ardent about the ongoing development of the Catholic ethos of the school, providing both support and challenge. They have a clear working knowledge of their school. All leaders work together and have secured robust provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils in what is a very diverse community. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and respectful of both adults and their peers, showing high levels of maturity and self-confidence. Various events are planned throughout the year to enrich the curriculum, to develop citizenship and promote community cohesion. The curriculum is also brought to life for the pupils through a range of educational visits and a residential school journey.

Within the school's Catholic ethos pupils are aware of the high expectations for behaviour, agree class rules and have a good sense of right and wrong. There are strong systems of assessment now in place reflecting work undertaken on the steps for improvement identified at the last inspection. Likewise marking and assessment has become consistent across the school and is developmental in approach.

The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school and is well known to pupils and staff. He works well with the Chair of Governors who is also a priest and jointly provides a strong chaplaincy role that is welcomed by all members of the school community. They complement each other well providing strong home, school, parish links and links to the governing body.

The school has successfully worked on the recommendations noted in its previous inspection alongside implementing the new 'Come and See' as its core Religious Education scheme, which it has resourced well. At the time of its previous inspection St Francis was described as, "a very good school with many outstanding features especially in relation to Catholic life" and to its credit has built on this, having successfully developed both leadership of Religious Education and the curriculum. Accordingly it is well placed to continue to sustain the outstanding level achieved and move the school forward. As a parent wrote, "I am proud about the progress of my child and the discipline in the school and their knowledge of right and wrong and relationships."

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

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- As part of an ongoing review of Religious Education undertake self-evaluation in line with the new Section 48 self-evaluation form.
- Review the Religious Education section of the school's website with a view to more widely celebrating this strong area of the school's curriculum.

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

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. St Francis Catholic Primary School has a distinctive Catholic identity, a strong Catholic ethos, a positive atmosphere with relationships based on Gospel values and it provides a caring environment in which children learn. Religious Education is not only taught in lessons - it is lived on a daily basis, by following the Gospel values as Jesus taught. The school has created a beautiful Peace Garden in its grounds, which provides an outdoor place for learning and worship. The flowers are all white heightening the peaceful nature of this space, which is enhanced in the summer months by a water feature that adds to the tranquillity of the area. The mission statement is central to the life of the school and is fully embraced by all pupils in their daily school life. Opportunities to participate in the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school are provided through the effective School Council and during Religious Education lessons. St Francis is a happy and vibrant school community where children are eager to come to school as identified in a recent pupil survey in which 98% of pupils reported that they enjoyed school. Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their 'school family' and they all strive to do their best to promote the strong ethos within the school. The school helps pupils develop experiences of the wider local community such as the river, museums and art galleries in order to enhance their learning. The school works hard to support parents, for example, by matching parent/teacher meetings at times parents can attend.

Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school for their personal support and development and are given a wide range of opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as, peer mediators, monitors, team captains and school council. They do this with enthusiasm and skill. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth. An effective programme for Education for Personal Relationships and Sex Education allows pupils to develop and foster excellent understanding appropriate to their age within a Catholic context and parents expressed support for and are well informed about this programme.

Pupils are very proud of their religious identity, deeply valuing the Catholic nature of their school and its links to the parish community. They are involved with parish and Diocesan celebrations, benefitting from staff involvement in school and parish activities. The school is a prayerful and loving community that provides a stimulating learning environment to reflect the school's mission and Catholic character. Pastoral care for a very diverse range of pupils is outstanding.

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

Excellent leadership and management are shown by senior leaders in promoting pupil achievement and learning. The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education provision has developed to a high standard and offers an example for others. The marking of Religious Education work follows the whole school marking policy, which has been reviewed and improved since the last inspection. Pupils are given 'next steps' as part of teacher and pupil individual communication/learning discussions. Teachers mark work with pupils present whenever possible. Pupils' ability to self-assess is strong; they are

reflective when considering their own learning and in the understanding of aims and objectives. The teachers use a variety of strategies for pupil self-assessment at the start and end of lessons such as 'The Pit' or the 'Blob Tree'. Lessons are well planned so that pupils are given time to assess their written work, which is often done with a partner.

Staff give generously of their time and energy to play a full and active role in the ongoing development of the school. Display is of a very high standard and serves to mark the school's distinctly Catholic ethos. Classroom focal points are prominent and are likewise of a very high standard. They are well used providing a strong focal point for prayer.

Pupils enjoy learning and take pride in their work. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally below average. They attain well in relation to learning outcomes across most areas of the Religious Education curriculum. Attainment in Religious Education compares favourably with attainment in other subjects. Interestingly, trends show that pupils whose families have a significant involvement in the parish tend to achieve above average levels of attainment. Pupils attain well across the Religious Education curriculum, gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. The majority of pupils meet age appropriate targets and a good number achieve above this. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with no significant variation between groups of pupils.

There is ongoing work to secure links with other faiths. All pupils have the opportunity to be involved in 'Other Faith Weeks' with visits to other places of worship, the Ten-Ten Theatre workshop, Book Week, an in-house Art Exhibition and a Christmas Production by Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The Religious Education Programme includes study about Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam.

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

The school's Religious Education policy states; "Our acts of worship are Christian in content and reflect and encompass Catholic practices of prayer and worship. They aim also to develop tolerance and respect for other religions, races and ways of life. They are: Celebratory, reflective and prayerful, educational and offer opportunities for pupil spiritual development. The daily act of school Collective Worship is reinforced by regular celebration of Mass held in the school. Acts of Collective Worship are seen as a gradual process which helps the children to achieve understanding of one of the liturgical elements of our faith tradition e.g. greeting, silence, praise, listening, thanksgiving and offering prayer, to help them understand and take part in the adult worship in the parish."

It is evident that policy is in practice. Pupils' responses to, and participation in, Collective Worship are outstanding.

There are a variety of prayer opportunities provided, thus ensuring that prayer is central to the life of the school. From a young age pupils are able to lead and respond to prayer in different ways. They are reflective and focused during prayer and Collective Worship. They speak highly of the different ways they pray in school and through participation in prayer and song they demonstrate their understanding of the Gospel message. The pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals and of the Church's liturgical year and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to class discussions and Religious Education lessons.

The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated and a suitable policy is in place that ensures the spiritual needs of all pupils are met. Prayer is at the heart of the school community and is inclusive and reflective. It is evident that from the beginning of their school life pupils are encouraged to have a special relationship with God through prayer. A variety of good liturgical and prayer opportunities enable parents and the parish communities to join the pupils in worship and prayer. Pupils are given the opportunity for daily prayer through Collective Worship. This is organised through a range of opportunities including key stage and class assemblies. These are a central and highly valued part of the life of the school. Key stage assemblies follow a rota allowing children to explore themes related to the current 'Come and See' topic, the 'Wednesday Word' or the liturgical calendar. The weekly *Rejoice and Merit* assembly values the children's achievements and relates to the Catholic life of the school. The responsibility for planning and leading key stage worship is evenly distributed across the teaching staff, with the support of the strong Religious Education leader. The support for this provision provided by teaching assistants is noteworthy. The pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect and write their own personal prayers in their journals. All classes say formal prayers, as suggested in 'Come and See' and prayers are linked to the liturgical season or current topic. The words of these prayers are displayed in each classroom.

A Year 6 class led the parish Mass, which is held in the school. They read extremely well, participated fully in responses, sang beautifully unaccompanied and with enthusiasm, creating a reverent reflective celebration.

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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**

St Francis is an exceptionally well led school, reflecting the cohesiveness and commonality of purpose between leaders, governors and managers. They all have an appropriate strategic place in the school's management structure in which they work very effectively, with distributive leadership proving to be a key element to its success. Leadership is deeply rooted in a personal commitment to Christ and his Church.

Promoting the Catholic life of the school is given the highest priority by leaders and governors, who have embedded the concept of their school's mission, enabling all members of the community to grow in faith. Religious Education is rightly placed at the core of the curriculum. The provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way it is planned and implemented secures ongoing improvement to outcomes for pupils. The Headteachers provide outstanding focused leadership and live out their joint vision successfully, creating a caring and hardworking community. There is a culture of expectation that see pupils develop considerable self-esteem and confidence.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and well managed. It provides strong evidence of the school's monitoring and self-challenge and demonstrates a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Governors know their school well and fulfil their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school and continue to do so. They take pride in the school's very close and well established links with the parish community and consistently work to move the school forward. With a 25% response of parental questionnaires virtually all respondents were positive with a number including favourable comments about the school.

The Parish Priest is a central and supportive part of the school community. He visits regularly to celebrate Mass and other liturgies over the course of the school year. There are positive relationships at every level within the school. He is well supported by the Chair of Governors.

The Religious Education Coordinator is an outstanding subject leader. She provides an excellent role model with a depth of subject knowledge and clarity of vision for her subject. She is driven to secure ongoing improvement and through regular subject monitoring secures ongoing momentum for her subject. She is very proactive in securing the highest possible standards in Religious Education across the whole school.

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

Leadership and management at all levels at St Francis are very effective and show a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. This has a positive impact on the personal development and wellbeing of the whole school community and gives priority to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The Headteachers are inspirational leaders with a clear vision of Catholic education which shapes direction for the school. Their style

of leadership encourages a strong culture of collaboration and ensures their vision is shared by all members of the school community. They are strongly supported by all members of the school's leadership team.

The governors fulfil their role in accordance with Diocesan guidelines. They assist in revising, updating and approving all aspects of Religious Education. The majority of Foundation Governors are practising members of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish with two being members of other parishes. The Governors regularly attend school celebrations and visit the school to carry out their responsibilities. The Religious Education Link Governor role is well established and whilst the current link governor is new to this role he plans to follow well established procedures which were in place with the previous incumbent. He will meet with the Religious Education leader on a regular basis.

A written update, *Governor Visit Feed Back Form*, following visits is shared formally with all governors. Governors are integral to the management of the school and the promotion of Gospel values which underpin the daily lives of staff and pupils.

Governors are well informed about provision in the school and the Religious Education policy, which is reviewed regularly and follows Diocesan guidelines.

The school has supported the development of the religious knowledge of five members of staff by funding the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS).

The provision of Religious Education is monitored regularly through lesson observations, learning walks and work audits/book scrutinies. These ensure that provision is of a high standard throughout the school. The Headteachers support Religious Education through its inclusion in the cycle of staff meetings; generous budget allocation; promotion of visits and visitors; attendance at Diocesan conferences and local network meetings; and by facilitating the attendance of the Religious Education leader at Diocesan meetings, training and cluster groups. Monitoring occurs according to the school's evaluation cycle. The Religious Education leader is responsible for maintaining resources which are kept centrally. Each classroom also has a selection of Religious Education resources.

Continuing professional development supports the Catholic life of the school, the spiritual development of staff and the teaching of Religious Education. This takes the form of staff meetings, relevant courses, peer observations and teaching and learning observations led by the Religious Education leader.

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

In lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was consistently outstanding. All lessons reflected teachers' outstanding classroom management skills. Lessons were marked by a strong rapport between teachers and pupils. Pupils were highly motivated, participated fully and were consistently on task. Lessons were of a good pace being thoroughly planned and resourced. The school follows the Diocesan recommended Religious Education scheme 'Come and See'. Questioning by teachers is excellent and encourages pupils to reflect on the Church's teaching and how this relates to their everyday lives. Reflection is also frequently central to assembly messages and common themes that are shared. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own actions and discuss issues with each other and staff. Lessons contained high levels of pupil engagement and exemplary behaviour creating a conducive learning environment. Pupils are supported in their learning in a variety of ways. They work effectively in mixed ability groups, in pairs and individually, with paired working being a particular strength. Teaching assistants provide discreet but effective support for individual and groups of pupils within classrooms. They are well prepared for the work they undertake and have good relationships with pupils. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and both lesson planning and marking are of a high order. Consideration could be given to expanding pupils' opportunities for more independent research work in order to extend learning opportunities for more able learners in particular.

Parents are well informed about their children's Religious Education and feel able to support them at home as a result. The termly Religious Education newsletter is a good source of information and guidance for parents. Parents are informed of school events and the Religious Education curriculum by weekly newsletters, which celebrate the weekly Mass and has an 'Aim of the Week', the school website and termly Religious Education newsletters. The school sends the 'Wednesday Word' home to every family in the school. This supports families to share and prepare for the Gospel on the following Sunday. During Advent pupils have the opportunity to take 'Posada Bags' home. This gave families the opportunity to host and look after Mary and Joseph on their journey to the stable. At the end of each year, the school reports to parents on the progress their children have made in Religious Education throughout the year.

A well planned, clearly structured Year 6 lesson offered challenge and appropriate levels of differentiation. It built very well on previous learning reflecting on the Gospel writers and the context in which they wrote. Excellent cross curricular opportunities were developed in the areas of literacy, geography and history without lessening the religious core of the lesson. Key Stage 2 prayer journals provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their lives, Christian living and the practice of their faith in an environment conducive to reflection. The personal nature of these journals also provides a conduit for disclosure that staff follow up in the context of the PHSE curriculum. A reception lesson on the topic of Baptism and celebration saw young pupils rise to the high expectations of their teacher who was superb in reinforcing learning throughout the lesson and the use of well differentiated tasks. Very good use was made of talk partners with these young pupils which is then well developed throughout the school. A Year 3 lesson reflected on different forms of prayer. The teacher was skilled at varying her teaching strategies to secure constant engagement of pupils. This included the use of a Mass sheet to identify formal and informal prayers. A Year 2 lesson used a picture depicting Jesus that was thought provoking for pupils. The lesson generated awe and wonder through the revealing of

artefacts that had been covered. Integrated within Religious Education lessons are elements of philosophy. A session with Year 6 pupils prompted by three pictures reflecting how children slept in different conditions, saw examples in the subsequent discussions of developed critical thinking skills. Pupils were very confident, articulate and able to express their ideas freely and demonstrated resoluteness in defending the views they formed. A high level of engagement was noted in this session.

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

Everyone at St Francis' is valued as an individual. The school provides a curriculum that supports and promotes pupils' learning, is inclusive and capable of responding to the needs of all pupils. They are encouraged to maximise their learning opportunities within a curriculum that relates to their own life experiences.

Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning in Religious Education and this is evidenced in enthusiastic responses and the good standards attained at the end of each key stage. Pupils' workbooks are clearly special to them. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a variety of special occasions, visitors and visits.

As part of the other faiths learning all pupils in Key Stage 2 visit non-Christian places of worship - a Mosque, a Hindu temple, a Gurdwara and a Buddhist temple. These visits are instrumental in developing understanding and tolerance of other beliefs.

There is a learning culture based on good attitudes to learning where all views are respected. There are clearly defined support mechanisms in place that are used consistently leading to peer relationships that are appropriate and secure.

The school's provision for education for personal relationships is embedded and able to support individual needs. Spiritual and moral development is integrated into all aspects of school life and impacts on all pupils' development. 'Education in Human Love' is taught in conjunction with the 'Come and See' scheme of work. Enrichment activities, Religious Education focussed visits and visitors to the school with subject specific objectives boost the interest of all.

The Pupil Development Centre and the Learning Mentor play an important part in developing the pupils morally, socially and culturally. Numerous opportunities for personal and Collective Worship result in the pupils' spiritual and moral development being outstanding.

The curriculum is driven by an excellent subject leader who is enthusiastic about all aspects of her role. She supports staff well. Her documentation is exceptionally well ordered and presented.

A pupil said in response to being asked how Religious Education had influenced his life, "I know now that the Holy Spirit is with me everywhere I go and God is there to guide and help me."

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

Whole school Mass is celebrated at the beginning and end of each term, on Holy days of

Obligation and on other special occasions. These Masses are held in Church. Each class also has the opportunity to lead and attend the weekday parish Mass which takes place every Thursday morning in school. Class teachers take responsibility for organising the Mass and choosing the hymns. Each year group from 1 to 6 attend at least four parish Masses a term. Additionally the Year 6 children and their families celebrate a special whole school leavers Mass. The pupils are presented with a Tao Cross to remind them of their time spent at St Francis. Year 2 also attend a Mass to celebrate their transition to Key Stage Two. In order to support them in their forthcoming journey, they are presented with a children's Bible. Special Feasts and Holy Days of Obligation are celebrated in church and the whole school attend, including the Nursery. In addition to the Masses celebrated throughout the year the school also marks important days in the liturgical calendar with special liturgies, such as Ash Wednesday, Penitential Service, Holy Week assemblies and The Way of The Cross.

Pupils are given an opportunity for daily prayer through Collective Worship. This is organised through a range of opportunities including whole key stage and class assemblies. These are a central and highly valued part of the life of the school. Pupils' responses to, and participation in, Collective Worship are outstanding. There is a variety of prayer opportunities provided, thus ensuring that prayer is central to the life of the school. From a young age pupils are able to lead and respond to prayer in different ways. They are reflective and focused during prayer and Collective Worship. Pupils enjoy singing and are enthusiastic. They speak highly of the different ways they pray in school and through participation in prayer, enacting gospels and song they demonstrate their understanding of the Gospel message.

The pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals and of the Church's liturgical year and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to class discussions and Religious Education lessons.

The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated and a suitable policy is in place that ensures the spiritual needs of all pupils are met. Prayer is at the heart of the school community and is inclusive and reflective. It is evident that from the beginning of their school life pupils are encouraged to have a special relationship with God through prayer. Staff show skill in planning a range of opportunities to ensure that pupils are able to participate in prayer in different ways. A variety of good liturgical and prayer opportunities enable parents and the parish communities to join the pupils in worship and prayer.

The school is very fortunate to be so well supported by the parish team which gives a significant amount of time to supporting Religious Education and the wider life of the school. Collective Worship has a significant impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

All staff follow the excellent example of the school's leadership team in modelling best practice when teaching or leading Collective Worship ensuring that this has a good impact on all pupils. They expose pupils to all aspects of the liturgical year and ensure that there are many opportunities for them to share in these. As a consequence pupils respond well to all that is provided for them.