



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 102909

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School
Worple Street
Mortlake
SW14 8HE

Inspection date: 25 June 2013

Chair of Governors:
Headteacher:
Inspectors:

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Mortlake Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Richmond LA. The principal parish which the school serves is St Mary Magdalen, Mortlake. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 88%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Key Stage 1, 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 234. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 17% of the pupils receive extra support in class. Approximately 27% of pupils are from an ethnic minority background. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average. Few are at the early stages of English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

St Mary Magdalen's is an outstanding school committed to excellence in spiritual, moral, social and academic education. The Headteacher motivates the school community with her clear vision of Catholic education which permeates the whole school and is shared by the whole staff and governors.

This is a warm, welcoming school reflecting a strong emphasis on teamwork. Excellent relationships between staff, pupils and parents reflect the Gospel values which are implicit in the mission statement and lived out in the daily life of the school. Pastoral care is outstanding and pupils' emotional well being is supported through a curriculum which offers many opportunities for spiritual reflection. Parents value this. As one family wrote, "There is a very strong link between the school and the local Catholic community and a real sense of togetherness." Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Provision for prayer and worship is outstanding. Effective assessment, monitoring and high expectations enable all to succeed. Leadership places great emphasis on staff training both in house, and at Deanery and Diocesan level. The school has identified the need to deepen pupils' knowledge of other faiths through visits to places of worship. The school teaches Judaism very effectively and now needs to develop the teaching of other faiths. 'Come and See' the new primary scheme has been well introduced and the school needs to continue to embed this in the curriculum. All areas of development raised in the last inspection have been fully addressed and the school has excellent capacity to continue to maintain high standards and improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Develop the teaching of other faiths to include faiths other than Christianity and Judaism.
- Enable pupils to deepen their knowledge of other faiths through visits to places of worship.
- Continue to implement the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme and embed it in the school's curriculum.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

The school demonstrates outstanding leadership ably led by the Headteacher. The Headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have high aspirations for all pupils. The school's mission statement is highly visible and has been adapted by the children and successfully shared with all members of the school community. The mission; 'To bear witness at all times to Jesus Christ' is understood by all the pupils as meaning use Jesus Christ as our role model. The staff work effectively together to create a strong cohesive team which ensures every pupil is nurtured and valued uniquely. The Governing body gives excellent support and has a good understanding of its duty to promote and maintain quality Religious Education. Effective leadership at all levels promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development. The Parish Priest is a frequent and welcome visitor. Parish links are excellent. One parent wrote, "The involvement of the church with the school is so positive. A perfect triangle of home, church and school." The school has an 'open door' approach always welcoming parents into the school. They all really feel part of the community.

GRADE 1

Class representatives meet regularly with the Headteacher and support the school in its drive to continue to improve. The Headteacher, Deputy Head and coordinator take an active role in the Deanery and Diocese. Opportunities for training are provided for all staff. The many attractive displays both in the classrooms and main areas of the school mark it as distinctly Catholic. The school closely monitors its provision and, through careful action plans, maps out how it will address areas in need of further development.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Prayer and worship is a strength of the school and an integral part of each day. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of prayer. They learn the traditional prayers of the Church and are frequently encouraged to compose their own. All focal areas have prayer books with prayers written by the pupils and these are used daily. In one class, pupils wrote prayers for the pupils moving into their class in September. The school has a well established and broad based programme of collective worship based on 'Come and See' and the Church's liturgical year. All assemblies promote Gospel values. In an assembly, led by the Headteacher, pupils entered the hall quietly creating a reverent atmosphere. The assembly was inspirational based on looking after our world beginning with the work of the school caretaker. Their excitement at helping to open thank you presents from the Australian headteachers was an awe inspiring moment. Opportunities for reflection, well chosen music and the enthusiastic singing of the pupils ensured all pupils were attentive and engaged throughout. The school has a focus on improving opportunities for pupils to respond further by participating even more fully in the planning of assemblies. Parents are welcome to liturgies and class assemblies and given the opportunity to socialise afterwards. Parishioners are warmly welcomed to the many school Masses in the church. The school delivers exceptional sacramental preparation for First Communions. Reconciliation services are held in Advent and Lent for key stage 1 and 2. Detailed termly plans are in place for assemblies and acts of worship. Worship is monitored through observation and scrutiny of planning. Pupil response is gauged through questionnaires and discussions. Year 6 lead worship through a dramatic Way of the Cross in the church. Focal areas around the school help to emphasise its Catholic nature. All classes have focal areas. In the best examples they are vibrant, meaningful and used by pupils. This best practice needs to be shared across the school. The Chapel/music room is a wonderful resource offering opportunities for staff and pupils to have a private reflective time. The focal area is outstanding. As a result of the excellent provision prayer and worship is central to the pupils' daily experiences.

Community cohesion

GRADE 1

This is a welcoming and inclusive school which ensures all pupils have equality of opportunity and full access to all aspects of the school life. The awareness of the needs of others in the local and wider community is promoted through fundraising. The school supports various charities including; Cabrini, CAFOD, Vipingo in Africa, The Old Bakery, a local centre for the elderly, and SPEAR, a homeless charity. The school provides a breakfast club and a wide variety of after school clubs, which include; gardening, eco warriors, music and sport. The school hosts a Saturday netball club for the community and a holiday club. There are good links with the local Anglican church where pupils sing for their Stroke Society meetings and the school grounds are used for their holiday club. There are excellent links with the local Catholic cluster and LA cluster of schools. The Headteacher outreaches to other schools as a mentor for new headteachers and to support the new free school which is opening soon. She takes a leading role in supporting the local education community. The School Council is very articulate and is involved in choosing projects, researching them and then organising fundraising. A 'Dragon's Den'

type of fundraising giving pupils money to spend to raise funds is very successful. This has included dog walking, shoe shine, cake making and car washing. The pupils are taught about global poverty and are supporting a village school in Vipingo. Year 4 are pen pals with pupils from this school. The School Choir sings locally to raise funds for charity. The school organises the 'Mortlake Summer Fair' annually for the whole community. Pupils care for each other through the buddy system and peer mentoring. Pupils understand that some of them may be vulnerable and need support. As a result of all these activities the school is truly inclusive enabling pupils to take a full and active part in their local community and to appreciate the needs of others in the wider world. One family wrote; "There is nothing more moving than watching Year 6 file into Mass accompanied one by one with buddies from reception class." Pupils also show prospective parents around the school. The school is open to sharing its good practice and a group of Australian headteachers spent the day there.

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Religious Education

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Achievement on entry is broadly average. Pupils achieve above expectations in Religious Education. The progress of more able pupils is now more closely linked to that in literacy. Assessment is well established and used effectively to plan further learning. Pupils of all abilities make excellent progress with their work because it is planned appropriately. Regular assessments including sub levels for pupils, enable the school to track progress closely. Tracking over time shows standards are continuing to improve. Pupils are able to express their understanding of their Religious Education topics with confidence because of excellent teaching. Higher order thinking skills empathy and outstanding questioning skills enable all pupils to have clear guidelines and high expectations. Opportunities are regularly provided in lessons for spiritual and moral development. Pupils are given opportunities to explore their faith and deepen their understanding. Pupils' workbooks are very well presented and show a variety of activities. Pupils take a pride in their work which is of a high standard. Pupils have a good grasp of religious language. A Year 1 pupil said, "Jesus' friends are called disciples."

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 1

The quality of lessons observed was outstanding overall. In the most outstanding lessons pace, high expectations, challenge, differentiation and reminders of the learning objective, were evident. All lessons were well planned. Role play was used effectively and pupils commented that, "they loved to walk in someone else's shoes." Marking is interactive and pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve. Support Staff are an integral part of the teaching team and add quality to pupils' experiences of Religious Education. In the lessons observed pupils were exploring our world created by God in various ways and all had good differentiated activities. In Reception, the teacher created a song from the pupils' ideas. In the plenary a power point of CAEOD pictures was used interspersed with some of the pupils own photos, all part of God's wonderful world. In Year 1 pupils were encouraged to think about our neighbours around the world and the more able shown how to write a psalm. An excellent example of hot seating with talking partners was seen in Year 4. This was based on homework of the lives of saints. A message from Pope Benedict about how we can be saints now was used as a model for pupils to write their own. A truly inspirational lesson on the wonders of creation in Year 5 gave pupils the opportunity to deepen their understanding of God's world and explore the awe and wonder of creation. The teacher's own sharing of faith provided a powerful focus for the pupils. Lessons built on prior knowledge and cross curricular links were evident especially in ICT, literacy, art and music. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to use bibles to look up texts and discuss them. Display enhances the teaching and learning environment and encourages pupils to think more deeply. The board 'I treasure myself because'; and 'lay your hands gently upon me' offered opportunities for pupil response. Display is exceptional, celebrating all aspects of school life. The First communion banners made by parents and pupils are outstanding and one pupil wrote; "Help me prepare for my first Communion as I receive the body and blood for the first time. May you be my guide as I walk in Jesus' footprints to your heaven."

The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 1

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for Religious Education following the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme and the Church's liturgical year. Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning because they are given interesting activities which are designed to stimulate interest and maximise progress.

A well balanced curriculum integrated with elements of personal and social education promotes pupils all round development and contributes significantly to their spiritual and moral development. Education in human love is delivered in accordance with Catholic practice and follows Diocesan guidelines. Resources are excellent and well used. The curriculum is enriched by visitors and the school now needs to extend this to visits to places of worship to support pupils understanding of other faiths. The teaching of another faith other than Christianity and Judaism needs to be given a higher focus. Homework is used effectively to support the curriculum.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The coordinator, with strong support from the Headteacher gives a high profile to this subject and its contribution to the school's educational mission within the Church.

Leaders at all levels set a clear direction leading to continuous improvement. The coordinator is hard working, dedicated and committed to her role and gives excellent support to the staff. She has introduced 'Come and See', improved assessment and pupil tracking. An excellent programme of inset has been delivered to the staff which improves their knowledge and supports them on their own faith journey. Effective monitoring takes place, which includes book scrutinises, lesson planning, assessment sheets and lesson observations with the Headteacher. Constructive feedback is given and followed up. Resources are well maintained and up dated. Files are wide ranging, detailed and provide evidence from a variety of sources. Development needs are accurately identified and plans put in place to continue to raise standards. Leaders are actively involved in training opportunities at Diocesan and Deanery level. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the development of the subject. The Parish Priest is outstanding in the support he gives to the school which is endorsed by the parent questionnaire responses. All staff are involved in assemblies, liturgies and pastoral care and promote the same shared values and vision. As a consequence the school's Catholic ethos and distinctiveness are very evident creating a nurturing environment where all can succeed.

GRADE 1

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