



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 102995

St Mary's Catholic Nursery and Infants' School
West Street
Carshalton
SM5 2EN

Inspection date: 5 February 2013

Chair of Governors:
Headteacher:
Inspectors:

Mr Bernard Tomkins
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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Sutton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parishes which the school serves are Holy Cross Carshalton, Our Lady of the Rosary Sutton, St Margaret's Carshalton Beeches and Holy Family Sutton Green. The proportion of pupils who are baptised is 99.6%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in Key Stage 1.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 7 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 261. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is below average. The school is situated in a socially advantaged area. Most of the pupils are of White British Heritage; 38% come from ethnic minority backgrounds. 15% of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The social and economic background of the pupils is mainly advantaged.

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's is an outstanding Catholic school, providing a high standard of Religious Education within a vibrant Catholic community inspired by its mission reflecting Gospel values of justice, tolerance, kindness, love and respect. Committed Catholic leadership is outstanding in ensuring the distinctiveness of the school in its philosophy and practice. The headteacher is an excellent role model, providing inspirational leadership to enthuse and encourage all staff. Governors are highly successful in fulfilling the mission of the school. They have a high level of commitment and involvement and fully appreciate their role of support and challenge, making a significant contribution to the success of the school. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. They enjoy coming to school and are proud to be part of it. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative and supportive of the school. One wrote "God is very much a part of the school. This can be seen through practical aspects such as assemblies and collective worship, but also through the love and care shown to the children by all staff members."

Areas for development identified by the last inspection have been addressed.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Extend and further develop challenge for the more able pupils in Religious Education, ensuring that this provision is evident in planning and delivery of lessons.
- Continue to develop links with all the feeder parishes that form part of the school community.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

GRADE 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels have a strong sense of the role of the school in the educational mission of the Church and provide clear direction for the Catholic life of the school. They work closely and harmoniously together to create a community and environment in which all are welcome and all are encouraged and supported to attain their full potential. The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear sense of vision which results in high standards and a strong Catholic ethos. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the work and Catholic dimension of the school. They are well organised and well informed and have robust systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school and their management role. The Chair of Governors is very committed to his role and has recently enrolled on the accreditation course offered by the National College.

The headteacher leads an enthusiastic and conscientious staff team, empowering them to take responsibility and encouraging their professional development. The school engages very effectively with parents and carers and parental questionnaire responses reflected this. Questionnaires returned frequently expressed appreciation of the school's communication with parents and commended the hard work and commitment of the whole school staff and Governing Body. School self evaluation is thorough and well developed, with contributions from all stakeholders. It is used effectively to inform school improvement priorities.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the whole school. Pupils have daily experience of formal and informal prayer and demonstrate reflection and reverence. The act of collective worship observed was joyful and prayerful, with enthusiastic participation by pupils and staff. The use of actions and signing encouraged participation by even the youngest pupils and enhanced the act of worship. Pupils are keen to take part in liturgies and participate in voluntary prayer. They offer a wealth of liturgical celebrations, to which parents are often invited, enabling them to contribute to the prayer life of the school. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the school community and is a well known and well loved figure in the school. Collective worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

Community cohesion

GRADE 1

The governors, headteacher and leadership team actively promote community cohesion at all levels. Links with the local parish are strong; however the pupils come from four feeder parishes and the school is aware of the need to liaise with all four, identifying this as an area for development. Through one of the parish priests, links are being developed with a parish and school in Peru. Pupils have been involved in fundraising and speak enthusiastically of their involvement. Within the school, there is concern, respect and hospitality shown towards others. Pupils are aware that they are members of a worldwide family and have responsibilities to one another. They have a well developed understanding that others may not be as fortunate as themselves and take part in a range of activities, both local and global, to help with this. Attractive displays, pictures and artefacts around the school celebrate the diversity of cultures and individuals and convey an appreciation that all are part of God's family. Governors and staff are aware of their duty to promote the common good and promote community cohesion by working to improve the quality of education for all pupils, committed to seeking out the true potential of every individual within the community. The school is inclusive, providing support for pupils and families as appropriate. Care, guidance and support is excellent. Parents spoke appreciatively of the caring nature of the school and in some cases, of the personal

support received during difficult times. Many school staff are active members of their own parish communities, serving as catechists or Special Ministers of the Eucharist.

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Religious Education

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are excellent. The school's well established systems of assessment and pupil tracking provide evidence that pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards in Religious Education, with significant numbers achieving at the higher levels. Pupils progress steadily in knowledge, skills and understanding. A small minority of pupils with special educational needs do not achieve age-related expectations, but nevertheless make good progress. Pupils in groups such as free school meals, English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve well; effective support systems ensure that these pupils achieve their best. Pupils' work is of a high standard, demonstrating their understanding of topics studied. Pupils are active participants in their learning and enjoy all aspects of Religious Education. Behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is excellent. Teachers' high levels of knowledge, grasp of religious literacy and expertise in teaching the subject ensure that the Religious Education offered at St Mary's is of a high standard. Lessons observed ranged from good to outstanding. Pupils were attentive and engaged. Lessons built on previous learning and were well resourced and structured. Particularly in the best lessons, pace was excellent and progress evident. Religious and emotional literacy was developed in all lessons and at every level. Work was interesting and pupils were enthused. A variety of strategies was used to enhance learning; this could be extended to include more active participation in some lessons. Questioning was excellent and encouraged pupils to reflect on spiritual, cultural and moral issues. Pupils were encouraged to relate their lessons to their own lives and experience. Marking was appropriate and developmental. Pupils responded to teachers' comments thoughtfully and took note of suggestions. Pupils with special needs were well supported; however, challenge for more able pupils was not always evident in the lessons observed. The school should now extend and further develop challenge for more able pupils, ensuring that this is evident in both planning and lesson delivery.

The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 1

The curriculum in Religious Education fulfils the requirements of the Diocese and the Curriculum Directory. Pupils are encouraged to investigate and reflect, develop appropriate skills and attitudes and to relate these to their own lives. Effective questioning skills encourage pupils' thinking and lessons include time for reflection. The school has recently introduced the "Come and See" programme of Religious Education and staff are adapting their assessment and planning procedures to meet the requirements of the new curriculum. A comprehensive bank of photographic evidence collected over past years illustrates a wide range and variety of activities used to support the Religious Education curriculum and the use of cross-curricular links. Visitors to the school and educational visits also enhance the curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum at St Mary's has richness and variety. It makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, including teaching them to respect other faiths and cultures.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

GRADE 1

Leadership and management in Religious Education are of a very high standard. The subject leader communicates a clear sense of spiritual purpose to teachers and pupils, based on her own strong faith and commitment. She is an excellent role model and is very supportive of the staff team, sharing her knowledge and expertise as well as her passion for the subject. In turn, she is well supported and encouraged by the headteacher

and senior leadership team. Co-ordination in Religious Education is well organised and thorough; the co-ordinator's files show a comprehensive picture of Religious Education in the school. A regular programme of Religious Education monitoring includes lesson observations, book and planning scrutinies, these could now be analysed to provide a sharper focus for improvement priorities. Assessment and pupil tracking are securely in place, including the progress of individuals and groups. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in their children's Religious Education and are kept well informed of school topics and events. One wrote, "We would simply not receive this additional support to our own faith from any other staff team." Governors are well informed regarding Religious Education. Development and progress is regularly reported to the governing body, who appreciate its importance in the school.

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