



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 100828

**St George's Cathedral Catholic Primary
School
33 Westminster Road
London
SE1 7JB**

Inspection date: 5th February 2016

Chair of Governors:	Mr Alex Scott
Headteacher:	Mrs Ann Higgs
Inspectors:	Mr Tom Cahill Mrs Catherine Burnett

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St George's Cathedral School is a voluntary aided 2 form entry primary school situated in the Cathedral Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school is funded by Southwark Local Education Authority. St George's serves families living in the Cathedral parish as well as surrounding parishes. The proportion of pupils attending the school who are baptised Catholics is approximately 88% which is less than at the time of the previous inspection.

The number of pupils on roll at the school has also reduced since the time of the previous inspection and both these lower figures reflects the rapidly changing demographics of the local area surrounding the school which is undergoing significant urban regeneration.

Overall, the school allocates 10% of available curriculum time to religious education at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The prior attainment of students joining the school is below national average and an increasing number of pupils joining the school do not have English as their first language and they often have weak social skills. The majority of pupils are from ethnic minorities and an increasing number originate from South American countries. 33% of students are eligible for free school meals which is significantly above the national average but close to the local average. However, it is likely this figure is much higher but is masked by the fact the Local Authority provides free school meals for all pupils. The number of pupils with SEN is also increasing although the number of pupils with an EHC plan is 0.9 % which is below the national average.

Date of previous inspection:

02nd March 2011

Overall Grade:

2

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding
Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Requires improvement
Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

**GRADE
2**

St George's is a good school and provides a warm, nurturing and inclusive environment for all its pupils many of whom come from homes located in areas of social and economic deprivation.

The school is a place of welcome, where the values of the Gospel are lived daily. The excellent relationships that exist within the school community is a real strength and are based on love and respect for one other. The school has greatly benefitted from the long serving Headteacher who has a clear vision for this Catholic school which is shared by pupils, parents, staff and governors alike.

Pupils are kind and caring towards each other and their behaviour is excellent. They develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong and the importance of looking out for those in need of help and support. They are excellent ambassadors for their school.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and very much appreciate the support provided to their children as well as their families. Staff ensure families in need of help are supported and that the pupils have the best chances to reach their potential and make the best of the opportunities the school provides. As one parent said "Staff are very caring and their example guides the children as well as the parents." Another parent said "My son loves his school and his teachers"

Parents are kept fully informed about the Catholic life of the school through regular newsletters. They also receive a termly newsletter which outlines the topics being covered in Religious Education lessons as well as key liturgical dates for the term. The school also provides the weekly 'Wednesday Word' to all families. A 'Practical English Course' for parents with little or no English is hosted at the school.

The Home/ School/ Parish links are also a strength of the school supported by the close proximity of the school to the Cathedral. The school chaplain, a priest who is based at the Cathedral is well known to pupils, staff and parents and regularly attends school assemblies as well as celebrating Mass for the whole school and individual classes at the Cathedral.

The good quality education provided by the school as well as excellent pastoral support enables pupils to make good progress especially taking into account their low starting points and attainment when joining the school.

The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. It has also successfully addressed the key recommendations in the previous report although further work is required to ensure the most able students achieve the outcomes expected of them at the end of Key Stage 2. Assessment was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection and the school has made very good progress in establishing an effective assessment system helped by the introduction of 'Come and See' and the determination of the Religious Education Coordinator to address this area of weakness.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to develop strategies and further enhance provision in Religious Education to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Develop links with other local Catholic primary schools to share resources and best practice and assist with the moderation of pupil assessments.

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

Pupils benefit hugely from attending St George's. As one pupil said "the school teaches us to be real Christians and helps us to share God's love with each other." They quickly learn that prayer is at the centre of school life and embrace this ethos enthusiastically.

The pupils benefit from high quality displays and religious artefacts around the school which convey Gospel teaching and mark the school as distinctly Catholic. Many displays use both English and Spanish as many pupils and parents are fluent in the latter.

The pupils feel very safe at the school and cared for by their teachers. They know that if they have a problem or concern, it will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils have a voice through the Pupil Leadership Team which meets with the Headteacher and some governors. They value the opportunity of having these roles of responsibility which they take seriously. For example, this team was involved in the review of the school's mission statement as well as the review of the school's behaviour policy.

The pupils also benefit from the strong sense of community within the school as well as links with the local community. Pupils and their parents spoke highly of the annual International Week organised by the school in the summer term. During the event all cultures and nationalities are celebrated through carnival, music, dance and costumes. Parents and other members of the local community are invited into the school. The school also celebrates Interfaith Week to ensure that the pupils develop an understanding of other faiths and a further week is devoted to learning about Judaism. The school has also strong links with the local Catholic secondary school, as part of a project called 'Faith Friends' older pupils come and work with the younger pupils in Religious Education lessons.

The pupils, and their parents respond very generously to requests to help those who are less fortunate. They raise significant amounts of money for the homeless in the local area as well as national and international charities such as Marie Curie Cancer Fund and CAFOD. They also give generously to support those victims of natural disasters e.g. The Philippines' Earthquake Appeal.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils made clear to the inspectors that they very much enjoyed their Religious Education lessons. They particularly enjoy the opportunities for role play and the creative tasks including the use of art and writing their own prayers.

As a result of improved teaching and the effective use of assessments by their teachers to track progress, the pupils make good progress in Religious Education

especially taking into account their low attainment on entry to the school. Currently pupils make better progress in Early Years and Key Stage 1. Leaders have correctly identified the weaknesses at Key Stage 2 and are taking appropriate action. For the more able, the school is fully aware there is further work to be done to ensure these pupils achieve the higher outcomes which is expected of them and work is ongoing. The school would benefit from building further links with local Catholic primary schools to share resources for Religious Education. This joint working would also sharpen the moderation of pupil's work and ensure greater consistency of levels achieved. Evidence seen during the inspection suggests achievement in Religious Education will at least match that for English and Maths at the end of Key Stage 2.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

The pupils showed great respect during acts of Collective Worship seen during the inspection. They are keen to participate in singing, reading and role play and celebrate each other's achievements especially in school assemblies.

Each classroom has a prayer table and wall as a focus for Collective Worship. Prayer tables are covered in a cloth of the appropriate liturgical colour. The school has strived to make these attractive and stimulating with a range of religious artefacts on display. Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers which they can share with their peers. Teachers also use time during Religious Education lessons as an opportunity for Collective Worship and prayer linking it to the themes covered in the lessons.

Pupils look forward to their school assemblies especially as many of their parents are able to attend. Assemblies are used effectively to build the self-esteem of the pupils in many ways. In addition to the singing and participation, certificates are given to the 'Stars of the Week' rewarding pupils who have made improvements in their progress, behaviour and attitude. The school also celebrates pupils who have gone out of their way to be kind and caring to others; 'Kind and Caring' certificates are presented to pupils by other pupils.

Each week, pupils who are celebrating their birthday are called to the front of the assembly and the whole school recites a 'Birthday Blessing.'

Another notable feature of whole school Collective Worship is the prayer tree situated in the main hall. Pupils are invited to write their own prayers and place them on the tree. Each week the Headteacher chooses one of these prayers and reads it during the assembly. The school chaplain always provides a blessing to the school community at the end of the assembly.

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

The Headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and is well supported by the senior leadership team and the governors. Leaders know their school very well including its many strengths and are able to identify the weaknesses. The governors are regular visitors to the school. They attend school events and Collective Worship as well as visiting lessons. Each governor is allocated a key aspect of school life which they monitor and provide feedback to the governing body. The Headteacher's termly report includes feedback on the Catholic Life of the 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

The Headteacher works closely with the coordinator for Religious Education to develop and monitor the provision of Religious Education. Governors are kept fully informed through detailed reports from the Headteacher as well as feedback from the link governor for Religious Education.

The Coordinator has been in post for 18 months and has had a significant impact on the quality of provision. The improved outcomes seen by inspectors through lesson observations and scrutinising work books of the pupils. She has a clear understanding and vision of what is required to further enhance the provision for Religious Education and has made an excellent start in achieving this. The school has adopted 'Come and See' for all pupils and leaders have ensured that training and support as well as resources are available to all teachers. Lessons are observed by leaders and managers to ensure these are of good quality and support and guidance is provided to teachers to ensure consistency across all Year groups.

The Coordinator has also introduced strategies to enhance the creativity of pupils in Religious Education lessons and this is helping to challenge more pupil, especially the more abled. Leaders are able to monitor the progress of students using tracking data from termly assessment and the Religious Education Coordinator ensures teachers are supported to help pupils who may be underachieving in the subject.

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

The quality of teaching is good and has continued to improve since the last inspection. The use of 'Come and See' together with the resources and assessments linked to the scheme has contributed to this improvement. Teachers are very well supported by the Religious Education Coordinator who provides regular training for staff and leads an inset for of the topics to be covered. Teachers make good use of audio visual aids and effective questioning to challenge the pupils to think more deeply. Teaching has been further enhanced by the whole school focus on Literacy as well as the focus on creativity in Religious Education lessons. The latter has encouraged the use of a wider range of teaching strategies which pupils find both challenging and enjoyable.

The workbooks of the pupils showed that teachers consistently follow the school's marking and assessment policy. The high expectations of the school in terms of the presentation of work was seen in all year groups which has contributed to enhancing the learning experience of the pupils.

In a good lesson seen during the inspection, a Year 2 class were discussing the Last Supper. The teacher used Leonardo Da Vinci's classic painting to develop the pupils' understanding of the Twelve Disciples as well as the bread and wine being the Body and Blood of Christ. The work was cleverly differentiated to take into account the wide range of ability of the pupils and learning was further enhanced by the very effective use of the teaching assistants working closely with the class teacher.

In all lessons seen, behaviour was excellent with pupils supporting one another and being respectful towards different views expressed by others.

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

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupil's learning is good. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted the Catholic projects 'Come and See' programme. This not only meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Director but clearly meets the needs and interests of the pupils attending the school. Teachers confirm that the resources for this programme are readily accessible and they feel very confident in teaching Religious Education.

10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education lessons in line with Diocesan Policy. Pupils religious knowledge and understanding is further enhanced through well planned assemblies and visits.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship is a real strength of the school. School assemblies are carefully planned to meet the needs of all the pupils and are used to celebrate the achievements of the pupils as well as their contributions to school life. The school chaplain provides support and guidance to enhance collective worship both in school and when these take place in the Cathedral. Music and singing are key features of assemblies and Masses. Pupils are given the opportunity for reflection and silent prayer on a regular basis during the school day.

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