



## 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 101037

Our Lady of Victories Catholic Primary School  
1 Clarendon Drive  
Putney  
SW15 1AW

Inspection date: 7 March 2013

Chair of Governors:	Mr P Delahunty
Headteacher:	Mrs D McDonald
Inspectors:	Mrs J Lenahan Mrs F Hawkes

### EDUCATION COMMISSION

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# SECTION 48

# Introduction

## Description of the school

The school is a smaller than average voluntary aided primary school serving the parish of Our Lady of Pity and Saint Simon Stock, Putney. It is located in the Mortlake Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Wandsworth LA. The school is historically over-subscribed. Currently, the pupil intake is 100% Catholic. The parish boundary is the catchment area for the school so the majority of families worship within the parish. The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 198. The school is located within a generally advantaged area with the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals well below average. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs is below average and two pupils have statements. At 33%, the number of pupils on roll from ethnic backgrounds is higher than is usually found in similar schools. The majority of this group come from French, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish backgrounds. The school operates on a very restricted site and is to be commended on the efficient way in which the limited indoor and outdoor space is utilised. The profile of the pupils on entry is above the national attainment level. 10% of curriculum time is allocation to the teaching of Religious Education in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2.

## Key for inspection grades

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

# Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

Our Lady of Victories is dedicated to living out its mission and ethos which is centred round "the life and teachings of Christ" with Catholic belief and practice at its heart. Leaders and managers exude a shared commitment to build on traditionally established values, aspire to achieving the highest possible standards whilst also embracing the need for further development. The headteacher gives outstanding leadership and is ably supported by an excellent Religious Education co-ordinator. Relationships within the school community are excellent and morale is high. The atmosphere is welcoming, purposeful and friendly, with staff demonstrating their commitment to all aspects of school life. Pupils are eager to share and enunciate how Gospel values guide their daily lives in school. A strength of provision lies in the seamless liaison between the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education. Links with parents and the local parish are excellent. Chaplaincy is very strong and has a powerful impact on provision. Governors bring a wealth of experience and commitment to their role and they are pro-active in supporting school improvement and development.

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

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Establish a SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) policy with clear procedures in line with Church and Diocesan guidelines.
- Embrace a broader dimension to the programme for community dimension to reflect local, national and global demographics.

Publication date ... 15 May 2013

# The Catholic life of the school

## Leadership and management

GRADE 1

Leaders at all levels have a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role of the school in expressing it. The leadership team, ably led by the headteacher and supported by the Religious Education co-ordinator, ensures that all aspects of the school improvement plan are included in termly actions and ongoing evaluations. They ensure clear direction is evident, that all members of the school community understand their role in enhancing the Catholic life of the school at all levels through a range of opportunities. These include celebration throughout the liturgical seasons, close links with the local parish and supporting the sacramental preparation of the pupils. Development needs are accurately identified. The headteacher, after a short few terms in office, has a clear vision of how to maintain the traditionally established high standards, whilst also leading new developments. These include plans to review the mission statement with all the stakeholders and enhancing links with the parish. She has also identified the need for the school to foster more open links with the local community so that the pupils' experience of the wider community can be broadened. Pastoral care is exceptionally good with a high standard of guidance and support. This dedication to supporting pupils' wellbeing ensures that pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission. The school is very well managed, despite the lack of space, the best use is made of resources, including proximity to the local church, and this ensures that quality of provision is to the highest possible standard. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding as they are courteous, respectful, responsive and proud of their school. The combination of effective leadership, purposeful and orderly environment, committed staff and polite pupils serves to make the school a haven for learning. Governors are very well informed. They are aware of the school's strengths and committed to upholding its caring, inclusive ethos and fostering a closely knit Catholic community. Governors have established that links between the school and parish are a standard item on the agenda thus keeping the Catholic life of the school foremost in their development plans. One outcome of this focus is that the governors and the newly appointed parish priest have initiated the use of the school premises to accommodate the First Eucharist programme for all members of the parish and not just those pupils who attend the school. Partnership with parents is exceptionally good. Scrutiny of questionnaires and discussions with parents reveal that they are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the 'nurturing environment' and 'dedication' of leaders and staff. Catholicity is explicit throughout the school building with outstanding displays linked to Religious Education teaching and the liturgical year, noteworthy of these is the 'Year of Faith' display in the main hall.

## Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Provision for collective worship is celebrated through a rich range of personal, group and whole school liturgies, opportunities for reflection, Masses, sacramental celebrations and assemblies. Pupils witness devotion and are encouraged to develop their own sense of awe and wonder. The assembly observed during the inspection was an outstanding example of collective worship as Reception pupils used role play to explore the concept of co-operation; their expose enthralled the whole school and was cleverly linked with prayerful intercessions from some Year 6 pupils, an outstanding rendition of 'Ave Maria' by the school choir, a reflective plenary by the headteacher on the gospel message and culminating in a blessing by the parish priest. The formal prayers of the Church are very well taught and incorporated into every facet of school life, including Religious Education lessons. The pupils' prayer book and 'Faith Books' bear witness to the importance the school places in guiding pupils to engage in meaningful prayer. Pupils engage in prayer in lessons and during assembly, they do so with reverence and humility. The celebration of the Eucharist in Church is at the heart of school's provision for worship. Pupils are given a thorough understanding of the significance of the Mass in the practice of their faith. Of

note, is the due attention given to teaching the components of the Mass through the Religious Education programme, an example being when Year 2 pupils learned about the relevance of the offertory and how to make their personal offerings. This dedication to teaching pupils about the Mass means that they have a more meaningful experience when they attend church.

The parish priest make a significant contribution to the prayer life of the school in supporting staff and pupils in their ongoing faith development and his input and guidance is greatly appreciated by parents, governors, staff and pupils.

### **Community cohesion**

Community cohesion in the day to day life of the school is outstanding. A parent summed up the school's contribution to cohesion by citing that "a strong, church-focussed community pervades both academic and social life with everybody feeling a part of something special". Governors and leadership embrace a sense of community by fostering close links with families and the parish. This approach gives parents and pupils a strong sense of being nurtured and valued. Members of the choir welcome the opportunity to entertain the elderly parishioners with carol singing and also performing at Ashmead Care Home at Christmas time. Pupils have opportunities to support a range of charities including Mission Together's 'Children helping Children', CAFOD and the Cabrini Society. A range of opportunities exist for pupils to develop a sense of serving and undertaking roles of responsibility within the school through the 'Buddy' system, undertaking roles as prefects and through membership of the School Council. The programme to teach pupils about the major world faiths is well incorporated into the curriculum and pupils have opportunities to learn from first hand practitioners of the faiths studied. This is a significant improvement in curriculum development since the previous inspection. The school has been working closely with a local community school on physical education activities and the headteacher has aspirations to extend the project to other areas of the curriculum, including Religious Education. Links to extend the pupils' understanding of the wider community and socio economic diversity are limited at present and this needs to be addressed.

GRADE 2

Publication date: 15 May 2013

# Religious Education

## Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Pupils have an excellent understanding and knowledge of their Catholic faith and the standards they achieve are outstanding. Attainment is above average at the end of both key stages. Oral skills are particularly well developed with pupils confident when using religious vocabulary during discussions. Pupils show maturity in assimilating new ideas and relating Christ's teaching to their lives. This was seen when Year 6 pupils reflected on the symbolism of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary; pupils are respectful, interested and enthusiastic. Pupils' workbooks convey engagement with the topics studied and demonstrate that they are able to reflect on the meaning of their faith in a spiritual and moral manner. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported by able teaching assistants so that they have full access to the curriculum on offer.

## Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 2

There are positive relationships in all classes and teachers have very good classroom management skills. Lessons build on prior attainment. The use of probing questions to ascertain levels of understanding and challenge thinking are a strength of the teaching. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives, allowing time for pupil reflection. The lessons observed during the inspection ranged in quality from satisfactory to outstanding. Where lessons were outstanding in all aspects, a lively pace was maintained to engage interest throughout, there was a good balance between teacher and pupil input, tasks challenged all ability levels and pupils made good progress. Where teaching falls short of expectations it is related to over dependence on didactic teaching. In Reception pupils would benefit from more child initiated learning and role play as there is over reliance on teacher led activities which prevent the pupils from reflecting on the learning intention. In Key Stage 2 pupils are reflective in their work and show good understanding. However, written work is mainly differentiated by outcome and teacher or teaching assistant support and written differentiation could be made more explicit. Scrutiny of books revealed that where role play or pupil initiated activities were in evidence, good understanding and learning took place. The incorporation of prayer in lessons and sometimes singing is commendable although inspectors felt that pupils would benefit from taking more ownership of prayer. Assessment procedures are very well developed, with good systems for tracking pupils' progress, backed up by a portfolio of work levelled against national criteria. This ensures that teachers have an accurate way of measuring pupils' progress.

## The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 2

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of the time-table is allocated for Religious Education, following 'The Way the Truth and the Life' programme and linked to the liturgical year. Currently, PSHE is taught as a discrete subject and has not, as yet, been cross referenced with the Religious Education programme. Policy and practice to implement a Sex Relationships Education (SRE) is being developed by the headteacher is in draft form at this point in time.

As this was an issue raised in the previous inspection in 2007, governors now need to bring about its inclusion into the curriculum in line with statutory obligations and Diocesan guidelines. The curriculum is enriched by liturgical celebrations which include Advent liturgy, Nativity plays, Stations of the Cross and devotion to Our Lady during the month of May. Effective cross-curricular links such as art, ICT, role play and literacy all serve to enhance provision. An example of art being used to promote learning was seen when Year 3 pupils studied an Elizabeth Wang painting to reflect on reconciliation. A generous budget ensures that high quality resources are available and effectively used. The close proximity of the parish church together with the regular visits of the priest to the school is

an added bonus in delivering the curriculum. The impact of this co-operation between school and church is tangible as this purposeful liaison supports teaching and learning.

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

**GRADE 1**

Religious Education has the highest profile across the school and its leadership and management are excellent. Clear goals are set for development and are at the heart of school planning. The co-ordinator gives teachers and support staff concise guidelines so that they all share a common purpose with a strong spiritual dimension. Monitoring of planning, lesson observations and work scrutiny are embedded and their outcomes influence the ongoing development of the subject. Book scrutiny would be enhanced further if there was a more specific focus each time which addressed whole school issues, such as looking at how pupils' assignments are differentiated. The co-ordinator maintains strong links with the Diocese and is at the forefront in leading and supporting the development of Catholic education through the local cluster group. The expertise she gains is very effectively disseminated to staff and all credit is due to her for the exceptionally high standards achieved by pupils in Religious Education. A further element of outstanding leadership is the way in which the co-ordinator is a mentor and role model who generously supports undergraduates from the Catholic Teacher Training College to hone their teaching skills. All this faithful leadership inspires the work of staff in Religious Education and continues to drive the school forward.

Publication date ... 15 May 2013