



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 101048

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
7 St Joseph's Street
Battersea
SW8 4EN

Inspection date: 12th March 2019
Co-Chairs of Governors: Mr Andrew Cooper
Mr Rex Wickham
Executive Headteacher: Mr Jared Brading
Associate Headteacher: Mrs Claire Mitchell
Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck
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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes

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Key for inspection grades

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

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a small single form voluntary aided School with capacity to become two forms of entry which as yet has not been realised due a fall in projected numbers in the borough. It is situated in the Balham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Wandsworth Local Authority. The Soft Federation it had entered into with the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Battersea became a Hard Federation in July 2015. A new school building under construction at the time of the previous inspection has been completed.

The principal parish the school serves is Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Joseph, Battersea Park, but pupils also come from Sacred Heart, Battersea and Frances De Sales, Stockwell and some chaplaincies serving the needs of minority ethnic communities. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 51%. Overall, 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 of age. The school is smaller than average. Currently there are 226 pupils on roll. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally below average with Nursery class pupils generally entering with ability that is significantly below national averages. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is 28% and 47% are entitled to free school meals (FSM). The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The number of pupils on roll who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is also higher at 46%. The school draws pupils from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds.

The school operates in a new, design-awarded building, utilising current underused areas exceptionally well for the benefit of pupils and income generation, balancing these competing factors very well. Classrooms have developed a character and reflect the Catholic ethos of the school. The school is likewise working to develop communal areas in the same way, albeit taking a measured approach.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's is a good Catholic school because:

- It is an exceptionally well led school. The school has been on and continues on a journey of self-evaluation and improvement that is bearing fruit. The vision of the Executive Headteacher is clearly communicated to the rest of the school. Due to the effective relationship with the Associate Headteacher, senior leaders and governors, both in St Mary's and across the Federation. it is embraced by pupils, parents and staff alike.
- Pupils show great interest and enjoyment in their lessons and the value that both themselves and the staff put in to their Religious Education work.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, intervening when necessary, to enhance pupils' learning.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Complete the current review of the school's Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policies. In conjunction with this, review cross curricular opportunities to facilitate enhancement of the extended curriculum.
- Review the leadership of Religious Education in the light of impending staff changes and secure a revised strategic Religious Education action plan to include measurable success criteria.
- Extend the role of Faith Friends to enhance class and whole school Collective Worship by enabling them to lead on the planning and delivery of this and engage them in the development of quiet areas for reflection.

Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

Catholic Life

2

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

2

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

Religious Education

2

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

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good

- Pupils are proud of belonging to St Mary's Catholic Primary School and of being part of the Federation with the Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. They have embraced changes that have been made and wholeheartedly welcome being part of what they see as being a bigger family.
- Pupils talk positively about the links with the parish and the local community. They are aware of the school's mission statement as it is in a prominent position in classrooms and around the school.
- They bear witness to their faith within school through their good behaviour and positive relationships with their peers and the adults that teach and care for them.
- Pupils are actively engaged in fundraising activities including, raising money to support CAFOD, The Catholic Children's Society, the Cabrini Society, local food banks at Christmas and singing at a local department store, in response to local, national and global campaigns. They express a keenness to be more involved in instigating and planning these, thus taking on roles of responsibility and leadership that further develop the Catholic Life of the school.
- Most pupils have an understanding and some can articulate what it means to have a vocation and understand the importance of using their skills and talents for the service of others.
- Through their work in Religious Education lessons, most pupils have an understanding that religious beliefs are important for many people and that some people may have different beliefs to their own.
- Pupils participate in celebrations throughout the liturgical year with their own school, as a federation, within the parish and the diocese.
- During the inspection, pupils showed a good understanding of the season of Lent and could talk about how it influenced their behaviour and preparations for Easter.
- As a parent wrote, *'St Mary's School is fantastic and has really supported my family'*, with another saying, *'The best decision I ever made was to transfer my child to St. Mary's. She has opened up to faith and knowledge'*. These comments reflect the 100% positive responses recorded on parental questionnaires.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is good

- The school's mission and Catholic ethos are at the centre of all the school does and is evident in the environment and the colourful displays in classrooms. Governors and staff are fully committed to the ethos of the school and seek to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is clearly articulated, standing as witnesses to Gospel values and providing positive role models for the community.
- The school's mission statement was developed for the federation with pupils, staff and governors, to link scripture to the lives of all pupils and staff. It was felt the parable of 'the Mustard Seed' best represented the aims of the school and the notion of nurture and growth. This is well understood by pupils and in discussions with them they were able to link the statement with clarity to their lives.
- The St. Mary's 'Faith Friends', who are drawn from Key Stage 2, are enabled to support their peers in their faith and be positive role models throughout the school. As part of their role they help to organise Collective Worship within the school and church.

They frequently read at Mass, lead in prayer, or the offertory. They also work with the wider community, including a local care home and will be visiting the care home monthly to undertake art with the elderly residents. This group is developing well and is gaining a profile in the school acting as positive role models for the rest of the pupils, particularly in their living out of the values which the school seeks to instill.

- Consideration could be given to extending the role of this group by enabling them to lead on pupil planning and delivery of class and whole school Collective Worship and engage them in the development of quiet areas for reflection.
- St Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive community where all are valued and invited to participate. As a result, all have a strong sense of belonging to a community that celebrates difference and diversity, especially during the teaching of other faiths.
- At St Mary's there is outstanding pastoral provision in place for all pupils. This is demonstrated by staff, and through the support of externally bought in services, for example, Sidebeside. Staff nurture and care for all of the pupils and take their safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously. There are robust systems and policies in place to guide and support staff to ensure all children are safe, know they are cared for and that their emotional and spiritual needs are met. This care also extends to the pastoral needs of members of staff. This was recently reflected when the school experienced a deeply traumatic child bereavement.
- The entire school community fully support the implementation of the Religious Education curriculum and Gospel values across the whole of school life, both in the classroom, through Collective Worship, at play, in the community and on residential visits.
- The school strives to provide extensive opportunities for the moral and spiritual development of all pupils and staff through its Religious Education and Personal, Health, Social and Economic (PHSE) programmes of study, including participating in the PATHS programmes of study for PSHE and the Junior Citizenship programme. Work is underway to complete the current review of the school's Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education policies and this should be prioritised in conjunction with a review of cross curricular opportunities to facilitate enhancement of the extended curriculum.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- At the time of the last inspection in 2015 the school was described as being, '*... at a crossroad and poised to improve because of the stability of staffing, formation of the Federation where expertise and resources will be used for the benefit of all*'. It is to the great credit of the strong focused leadership provided by the Executive Headteacher and the dedication of the Associate Headteacher that in a relatively short space of time this prediction is beginning to bear fruit. Their leadership is determined and purposeful and this has supported the newly appointed Religious Education co-ordinator. The co-ordinator from Sacred Heart has also provided further support and the parish priest has met the new subject leader. Recently, as a Federation, they have

joined together to plan a Mass for Don Bosco Feast Day and Ash Wednesday. This reflects the development of a mutually supportive team approach that provides a strong capacity for improvement building on the significant progress made to date particularly in the light of an impending change in subject leadership.

- The areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed. As a result, work continues taking account of recent changes, to further update policies and procedures for Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education. Parents expressed both confidence in the school and desire to support the school's work on these. Monitoring has shown significant pupil progress over time and confirms that the required 10% of curriculum time is being given to Religious Education. Appropriate curriculum provision is being made in regard to the teaching of other faiths and a good programme of Collective Worship has been established.
- Governors reflect upon their strategic duties of ensuring that the Catholic life of the school continues to develop and is celebrated. Through the governors' monitoring group, the governor for Religious Education monitors the progress of the annual action plan. There are also regular meetings with the subject leader and governor for Religious Education to provide a greater insight into teaching and learning. Religious Education is a standing item on governor meeting agendas.
- It will be an appropriate time to review the leadership of Religious Education in the light of impending staff changes and secure a revised strategic Religious Education action plan to include measurable success criteria.
- The Religious Education subject leader attends the termly Diocesan co-ordinator meetings and the Catholic cluster group network meetings and feeds back to the SLT and disseminates to staff through staff meetings. This includes a recent staff meeting which focused on the importance of carefully designing the tasks to meet the needs of the learning objective and also allowing pupils to fully demonstrate their understanding in a variety of creative ways.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good

- The use of the 'Come and See' scheme, secures good provision, promotes creative approaches to learning, and alongside good assessment procedures, ensures that standards and achievements in Religious Education are at least good.

- Pupils show great interest and enjoyment in their lessons and the value that both themselves and the staff put in to their Religious Education work. This is clear in the level of presentation in class focus areas; they contribute positively during lessons, are well behaved and generally maintain focus throughout. Their participation in the subject is evident from lesson observation, homework projects and their keenness to be involved. They take great pride in their work. The impact of this positive behaviour can be seen in enthusiastic and active contributions and the interest and respect shown to others as views, work or ideas are shared.
- The Diocesan advisor noted in his visit reports that, *'There was a lot of exciting opportunities created during the lesson. The children were eager'* and *'The children listened carefully and they responded with maturity to the opportunity provided to silently pray'*, and inspectors have likewise evidenced these comments in some classes. The school should look now to developing consistency in this regard across the school.
- Pupils start school with knowledge and skills typically below those expected for their age. They generally make good progress in their learning as they journey through school. There are only slight variations in the attainment and progress of children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are known to be entitled to free school meals.
- Pupils identified as having SEN and/or disabilities are well supported by skilled teaching assistants. Current tracking shows that the standards of attainment of most pupils in each year group are now in line with what is expected and where this is not the case, the difference is clearly diminishing. Through evidence in work, and from conversations many pupils, are able to demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately.
- Pupils working at different levels within classes are provided with a range of activities to meet their needs. This is evidenced in very good class portfolios and books that reflect the good learning that has taken place. Teachers are given termly feedback with areas for development linked to the monitoring of books and portfolios. This is then checked to ensure appropriate action has taken place.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is

- Teaching and assessment is good. It is commendable that this has been sustained over a period of national staff retention difficulties. Most teachers have high expectations, plan interesting lessons and set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve. Consequently, from their starting points, almost all groups of pupils make good and sustained progress.
- Teachers are effective at meeting the needs of most groups of pupils, however, work is not always matched well enough to challenge the more able pupils. Where teaching is good or better, it is because teachers have a high level of expertise both in terms of their knowledge and understanding and of what constitutes effective learning in Religious Education.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, intervening when necessary to enhance pupils' learning, and are becoming more familiar with assessing pupils using the whole range of work from the topic and school tracking.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers provide improvement prompts and guidance as to the next steps in their learning. This is in line with the school's marking policy and is becoming consistent across the school. Pupils are knowledgeable of the

whole school feedback strategies used and are able to respond and develop their learning further.

- Lessons observed were consistently good. Where teaching is good or better, lessons were marked by a consistency of approach that establishes strong behaviour for learning, challenge, variety of activities, good use of information and communications technology (ICT), very good teacher questioning, the building on previous learning, a good pace and very good vocabulary development.
- The parish priest and deacon make a valuable contribution to the Religious Education curriculum through their excellent and valued input into the curriculum and teaching sessions.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good

- St Mary's is a very well led school. The school has been on and continues on a journey of self-evaluation and improvement that is bearing fruit. The vision of the Executive Headteacher is clearly communicated to the rest of the school and due to the symbiotic relationship with the Associate Headteacher, senior leaders and governors both in St Mary's and across the Federation, it is embraced both by pupils and staff alike.
- The Catholic ethos of the school is the central focus of all school self-evaluation and this has led to well targeted planning for improvement.
- The commitment and leadership of the Head and Associate Headteacher have had an impact on raising standards. Consequently, teaching and learning continues to improve across the school.
- The self-evaluation form provided for this inspection confirms key areas for improvement have been identified and actions taken to address these with the impact of these actions becoming apparent. There is a clarity over vision for the future and as to how it will be realised. It would be an opportune time to revise the Religious Education action plan to ensure it is strategic and includes measurable success criteria.
- The school works closely with the parish to ensure that sacramental preparation is in accordance with Diocesan policy.
- Provision for Religious Education is equitable with other core subjects in terms of staffing, curriculum resourcing, capitation and curriculum time. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to Religious Education offering support, but also confident in its ability to challenge. They ensure that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is

- On the day of inspection during the act of worship observed, pupils gathered respectfully, listened attentively and participated well in the first four Stations of the Cross that were enacted by Year 6 pupils. Pupils read well and overall there was strong engagement throughout, although care needs to be taken to maintain the

engagement of upper key stage 2 pupils. Pupils throughout the school act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. In general, they sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer confidently in an age appropriate manner.

- Plans are in hand to reflect the Catholic ethos of the school through artwork in the main hall which will serve to enhance this area for Collective Worship.
- At interview, pupils spoke about how they enjoyed their times of worship, particularly the times they were actively involved in it and also when they could be 'silent and calm'. Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer making a good response to the new after-school worship group organised by a member of the parish.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical structure of worship and of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which a majority of pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.
- A significant number of pupils at St Mary's are non-Catholic but fully embrace the Catholic ethos of the school. Other cultures and religions are celebrated throughout the year, to ensure the pupils have an understanding of the wider world in which they live.
- When pupils are reading at Mass, the teacher ensures that the children understand the theological content of the reading before allowing them to take it home to practise so that they can read the passage with a deeper insight into its religious meaning. The emphasis placed on the return of the completed Wednesday Word has led to increased participation in and understanding of the Gospel and is evident in pupils' responses.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, it is engaging and members of the community speak positively about their experiences.
- Relevant staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Timings are suitable and age appropriate. Focus areas, music and modern artefacts are used actively to engage and support pupils.
- There are many Collective Worship events planned for throughout the whole school year. Reception and key stage 1 classes have a Celebration of the Word taking place in school with planning support from the parish team. Key stage 2 pupils attend Mass in the parish with Sacred Heart Primary School and the school attend Mass as a whole

school at least once a term. Each week one class receives a visit from either the parish priest or deacon to say prayers as part of morning Collective Worship.

- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is quite good.
- Since the last inspection, the Salesians have taken over the parish, which has had a positive impact on St Mary's. The parish team is seeking to federate its provision across the two churches as well as the two schools. This has led to a more enhanced provision for both schools in the Federation. Senior School staff are supported by the Salesian Community and are central to acts of Collective Worship. The senior leadership team (SLT) lead and support all acts of Collective Worship across the school. They act as a source of advice to teachers and ensure that teachers are confident preparing and delivering Collective Worship with their classes. The parish team are always seeking to improve their involvement with the pupils and the Lenten retreat is an example of this.
- The support of the parish priest, deacon and Salesian community are viewed as a blessing on the school. The support, time and expertise they provide in addition to the strong Chaplaincy role they play in the whole school community serves all and is deemed central to the ever strengthening Catholic Life of the school.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders provide policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. Themes are shared to give worship a suitable direction.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are very good models of practice for members of staff and pupils. They offer support to those less experienced or less confident teachers and provide quality regular Continuing Professional Development.
- Copies of the 'Wednesday Word' are provided for families to follow the Church's liturgical celebrations and share together at home. This in turn is supported by a regular Religious Education Newsletter that ensures parents are aware of and support their child's Religious Education in school.
- A programme of Collective Worship for parents and carers to be invited to has been developed.
- Governors are visible at and support the Catholic life of the school through attending Masses and services and Religious Education training and inset. The governors meet the subject lead as part of a governor visit programme.