



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 102995

St Mary's Catholic Nursery and Infants' School

West Street

Carshalton

Surrey SM5 2PT

Inspection date:

9th March 2018

Chair of Governors:

Mr Bernard Tomkins

Executive Headteacher:

Mrs Shirley Hulme

Inspectors:

Mr Stephen Beck

Mr John Bonnici

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Interim Director of Education: Mr Stephen Bryan



Key for inspection grades

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

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided three form entry infant school. It is situated in the Sutton Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school has a large catchment area and serves four main parishes in addition to a number of others. 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 Catholic is 100%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10%.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 7 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 318. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. Fewer than 10% of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium, which is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, but an increasing number are from minority ethnic heritage with a number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language (EAL). The majority of EAL pupils are European with the largest represented group being Polish. The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is below average 2.5%. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) is below average 9.5%. The school is situated in a socially advantaged area, which is not mirrored in the school's intake.

St Mary's Nursery and Infant School joined with St Mary's Junior School to become a Federation led by one governing body in September 2014. Since the last Section 48 Inspection a new senior leadership team has been established, including a new Religious Education leader. The Headteacher of the Junior School as Executive Headteacher of the two schools for nearly four years has done an outstanding job in building up the staff team and in moving the school forward through inspirational leadership.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's Nursery and Infant's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Mary's is a welcoming and nurturing school where a strong sense of family is clearly evident. The Catholic character and ethos are at the centre of the school and strongly reflect the school's commitment to Gospel values rooted in the community. The united staff witness helps the pupils in the practice and appreciation of their faith. The place of Religious Education is clearly at the core of the curriculum and informs the breadth of teaching in the school.
- The Executive Headteacher is driven to improving the experiences provided for the pupils to ensure that they enjoy, value and develop their relationship with God, through prayer, worship and high quality Religious Education. Her vision is shared with all. She is ably supported by staff, governors, Parish Priest and pupils. Her inspirational leadership in providing a Catholic education is to be both commended and celebrated.
- There is an age appropriate feeling of calmness and spirituality, which permeates every area of the school life. From Early Years Foundation Stage to end of Key Stage 1, pupil progress and achievement in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are fully involved in their own learning.
- Worship and prayer are central to the life of St Mary's School and take place regularly, both at whole school and at class level. Its provision is an outstanding element in the life of the school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

With no significant areas for development the school should continue to build on its many strengths by;

- Supporting staff as the new approach to assessment without levels becomes embedded.
- Developing pupil participation and roles in the spiritual life of the school through more proactive opportunities to prepare, actively participate in and develop liturgies.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

Catholic Life

1

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

1

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

1

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

1

Religious Education

1

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

1

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

1

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

1

Collective Worship

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

1

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CATHOLIC LIFE

1

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

- Pupils know the mission statement and the school's values and with staff guidance, self-evaluate their behaviour in light of these ideals.
- All pupils are very proud to belong to this strongly Catholic school. They aspire to follow in their patron, St Mary's, footsteps by being kind to each other and this is reflected in the happy, purposeful and caring climate evident throughout the school and the excellent pupil behaviour observed throughout the inspection.
- The pupil voice within this infant school is strong. Through the School Council, pupils are able to influence school practice. They are given opportunities to examine matters and make choices e.g. choosing the Christmas charity, providing ideas for school environment improvements.
- There is a strong sense of a community firmly rooted in Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Pupils value one another and understand at an age appropriate level, how to live out the Gospel values. The staff have gelled as a team and are mutually supportive and complimentary of each other. They are committed to the high profile given to Religious Education in the school. Standards are high. Pupils make very good progress throughout their school life in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- The Executive Headteacher is an excellent role model and is well supported by the governing body and leadership team, all of whom have worked tirelessly to improve the school and make it a centre of excellence in Catholic education. As a result of her efforts and commitment, the progress made over recent years is substantial.
- They are outstanding role models providing very clear direction for improvement and ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and these have significant impact.
- A good level of parental questionnaire responses were received and these were 100% positive. A parent commented, "What is most important to us is that our children grow up to be positive and active members of their community and St Mary's is the perfect foundation for this."



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

- School leaders are clearly committed to the mission of the Church. They are conscientious in their delivery, providing a strong sense of spiritual purpose with a focus on improving standards and the fullest personal development of all pupils.
- The committed Religious Education leader is a driving force within the school and is considered to be highly effective by all stakeholders. Her enthusiasm for her subject is infectious and inspires confidence in all that their contributions to the religious life of the school are important and valued.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. They work effectively with the subject leader and Executive Headteacher and are committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists. They are highly ambitious for the school, have a strong skill set and are led by an excellent Chair who gives a significant amount of time to the school.
- The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, identifying correctly the areas for further development and is explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. It is clearly linked to the school improvement plan and reflects a determination to move the school forward under a 'we can do' mantra.
- Parents speak very highly of the school; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. They are extremely proud of their school and commented on the warm welcome and 'open door' policy.
- The decision to appoint a Chaplain to serve the Nursery, Infants and Juniors has proved to be exceedingly beneficial by providing dedicated emotional and spiritual support for pupils and their families. This is meeting the increasing needs of the community, including family break-up, bereavement and mental health issues. The Chaplain works with each class at least once each term and with individuals as required. She is gifted in her ministry and is an exemplar for this role at primary level which could usefully be shared with other schools.
- Pupils are taught that regardless of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances they are equally valued and they articulate this view. Useful community internet links e.g. Missio can be accessed through the school Google Drive classrooms.
- In addition to the 'Wednesday Word' a weekly newsletter sent to staff, governors, parents and carers containing a Gospel reflection, based on a Gospel reading from the weekly lectionary. Parents expressed their appreciation of both and rated the school communication very highly.



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

- The school was rated as outstanding at the time of its last inspection and the inspectors have been able to validate the school's own self-assessment that through the journey it has been on it has successfully built on its strengths and continues to be outstanding.
- Spirituality leads the School Improvement Plan with the current aim: 'To provide pupils with the knowledge of the Catholic faith, self-belief and sense of community necessary in order for them to live as brothers and sisters of Christ'
- The Executive Headteacher sees promoting the Catholic identity of the school as one of her key roles and with the school's Leadership Team is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are outstanding role models for staff and pupils. They are enthusiastic leaders and show great drive to develop the Catholic ethos of the school.
- On-going assessment is used to inform planning and move children's learning forward to meet the challenges set in the school's Religious Education programme. The school is currently embedding a recently trialled programme for assessment without levels.
- As a consequence of Religious Education monitoring, the subject leader provided a written guide and CPD on pink and green marking in Religious Education to support the school's marking policy. It is commendable how Early Years is included in an age appropriate way. As learning in EYFS has become more specific, with outcomes being recorded in their own special books in Reception and floor books in Nursery.
- Assessment is recorded in line with the whole school assessment policy and practice. It has been a key focus since the last inspection in line with the school's priorities and changes to Diocesan policy and practice. School based evidence shows that this is contributing to raising standards in Religious Education.
- Parents are informed and involved in the Religious Education of their children and this is welcomed positively by the school, as parents are recognised as the first educators of their children.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

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

- Everyone at St Mary's Nursery and Infants' is valued as an individual. The school is inclusive, capable and proactive in responding to the needs of pupils. All pupils are encouraged to maximise their learning and self-evaluation opportunities contribute to this.
- The pupils of St Mary's enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are motivated to enquire more deeply into their faith and that of others. They spoke with pride of their work that is displayed within their classrooms and corridors.
- Individual support is given to those pupils with the greatest educational needs. Pupils are actively involved in their readiness to learn and this builds positive relationships within the classroom. Through termly assessments and discussion with their pupils, teachers update targets, indicate next steps and praise their achievements. Book scrutinies and lesson observations are carried out by the Religious Education Leader and feedback is given to staff. Continuing professional development ensures that teachers have good subject knowledge.
- The curriculum of 'Come and See' is delivered to a high standard. Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well, enjoy their work and achieve very well. They are challenged consistently to relate the school mission statement to their daily lives as to how they bring God's kingdom to those around them. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed.
- There is a culture where it is 'okay' to be wrong and to make mistakes as part of the learning process. This has led to good attitudes to learning where all views are respected.
- Planning and monitoring highlight a range of teaching strategies that teachers use to ensure the curriculum matches the needs of all learners, with secure management in all classes leading to positive behaviour by pupils. They feel safe in the school. Very good Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship links assist the process of meeting the needs of all learners. The school's provision for Relationship and Sex Education is excellent, and staff are well able to support individual needs.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding

- Teaching and learning in Religious Education ranges from strongly good to outstanding. Good relationships among pupils and with their teachers are used positively to create an atmosphere that promotes learning.



- The quality of teaching observed and how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is brought to life through strong cross curricular links and high levels of religious literacy. This includes strong classroom management, positive learning strategies and engaging starters. Lessons are well planned, differentiated and build on the pupils' previous knowledge. All staff have high expectations of learners and interact sensitively and skilfully in discussions with pupils.
- Staff are well qualified with a balance of experienced teachers and non-Catholic staff in each year group. This leads to teachers having a secure subject knowledge which they deploy with confidence, energy and enthusiasm.
- All staff are well motivated and provide excellent role models for the pupils. They have high expectations for all and pupils are challenged and encouraged to do their best.
- Planning is clear and effective with appropriate learning objectives that pupils understand. The "Come and See" scheme of work is followed but staff are encouraged to see it as a starting point and take lessons outside, be creative. As a result of the school's approach to planning and the use of various thinking tools, all pupils are able to access the curriculum. Differentiation is provided in a variety of ways to enable success for all such as by outcome, differentiation of task, focus groups and varied questions.
- Lessons judged by inspectors to be good or better engaged all pupils because the good subject knowledge of teachers enabled thoughtful planning of a variety of approaches to the topic and range of activities, which were well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils' abilities. There was good pace and balance between teacher input and pupil activity which took many forms.
- Interactive whiteboards were used imaginatively and teachers' questioning was well judged. Writing scaffolds supported written answers, but there were opportunities for free response. Teachers encourage the development of the skills and confidence needed for independent learning. Consequently pupils were motivated and challenged and made good progress.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding

- The Executive Headteacher demonstrates a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. She inspires and supports the whole school community.
- Leaders use a range of monitoring activities to regularly check the quality of the teaching and, as a result, have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development. Clear steps for improvement are detailed in the school improvement plan and the Religious Education action plan which forms a part of it. Whole school leadership, including governance, places Religious Education



clearly at the centre of school life. It is supporting the school well through increased resources and a commitment to improving the expertise of the staff through professional development.

- The Religious Education leader has an excellent understanding of the responsibilities of her post. She supports her colleagues in developing their expertise. She is conscious of the fact that she also needs to continually develop her own expertise in order to support her colleagues most effectively.
- The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well informed by best practice in Religious Education. Governors are regular visitors to school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. Their diverse backgrounds enable them to be extremely supportive, but also confident in their ability to challenge when appropriate.
- There has been an appropriate focus in the school on raising the attainment of pupils and ensuring that they are making expected progress. The school recognises opportunities for enrichment in the curriculum and is taking this forward along with further developing cross curricular opportunities.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

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

- Pupils fully embrace the opportunities for prayer in school, including those beyond class and whole school acts of worship. In Collective Worship, pupils join in confidently with traditional prayers and responses. They sing with a genuine sense of joy and this reflects the fully inclusive nature of these celebrations.
- Liturgical singing is a strength of the school. Pupils sing in parts and hymns are often accompanied with actions and signing or both, which are carried out enthusiastically by all members of the school community. The pupil liturgy group composed a lovely school hymn, 'Say his name'.
- Pupils are becoming more adept at taking an age appropriate lead in class and whole school acts of worship. The school is developing this further by ensuring all staff have the confidence to develop this in the pupils so that acts of worship are more pupil prepared and delivered.
- In the liturgy attended during the inspection, pupils responded in a reverent way, showing an enthusiasm for prayer and liturgy and in particular singing. The pupils considered the life of St Frances of Rome and how choices can be good or bad. Good opportunities for prayer and reflection were provided and as the candle was lit everyone joined in singing 'May the light of Jesus shine in our hearts'. The liturgy message was usefully reflected on in a number of the lessons observed.
- Pupils have learnt much through following the journey of 'Mary's Bear', the school's Teddy Bear, as it has journeyed with pilgrims, with a photographic record being produced to record the religious places visited. Good use is made of pupils interest in the bear's travels to generate good cross curricular links.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- The quality of provision for pupils at whole school assemblies, services etc. is outstanding due to leaders' different strengths. Pupils are encouraged to participate through personal involvement with the Gospel e.g. adding to a display, writing, carrying out an action like finding a lost sheep in the school.
- A regular rhythm of prayer is built into the daily life of the school and an established pattern of opportunities are offered for the school community to gather for prayer, reflection and liturgy. Parents and parishioners are welcomed and take advantage of opportunities offered by the school to be involved in worship.



- Staff are skilled in planning and leading worship and are beginning to actively encourage pupils to lead and write prayers at an age appropriate level. The school recognises the need to further develop their skills in this area. Acts of worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the scheme of work topic and the liturgical calendar; they are responsive to the increasing diversity of the pupils.
- The school environment provides opportunities for reflection and every class has a prayer space. The Year of Mercy door has been adapted and installed outdoors and as a recent focus staff are encouraging periods of sustained, silent reflection. Staff give positive witness to pupils by attending and leading Collective Worship including assemblies, services and Masses.
- As a parent said, "I recently attended a class visit to Holy Cross Church. I was very impressed by the children's behaviour and ability to join in with all parts of the Mass. They were respectful and engaged throughout and asked interesting and searching questions".

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

- The school builds opportunities to explore the common values of Other Faiths in the overall Religious Education programme and to share their cultural richness so that the pupils grow up with respect for others and their beliefs. They are encouraged to recognise commonality and respect differences.
- The calendar for Collective Worship allows for pupils to take part in a range of Masses and liturgical celebrations. These age appropriate acts of worship reflect the pupils' positive attitude and demonstrate their ability to empathise and apply Gospel values to their daily lives.
- Leaders and managers, including senior leaders, provide opportunities for Collective Worship, which enable pupils to develop their spiritual lives. They are a model of good practice for staff and pupils and are highly visible as leaders of Collective Worship. Leaders monitor (informally) whether staff provide the excellent role modelling demanded during Collective Worship and feedback is given.
- The constant moderation and evaluation of provision for Collective Worship is evident in the changes made over the years. For example, assemblies with messages about school events have been changed to liturgies, which solely reflect on the Gospel; there are now periods of sustained silent worship; classes have more services and attend Mass more frequently. From September 2017 Collective Worship has been included within the annual Religious Education monitoring cycle. These celebrations are now observed alongside lesson observations e.g. Thursday Liturgy, Chaplaincy Sessions.