



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 138612

St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School
Becket Close
South Norwood
SE25 5BN

Inspection date: 10 June 2013

Chair of Governors: Mr Mark Humphreys
Headteacher: Mr Noel Campbell
Inspectors: Mrs Helen Thompson
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EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary is a Catholic academy. It is situated in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish which the school serves is Our Lady of the Annunciation, Addiscombe. A few pupils come from St Chad's, South Norwood. The proportion of pupils baptised Catholic is 100%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all key stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 412. The attainment of pupils entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 5% of the pupils receive extra support in class. Approximately 58% of pupils are from an ethnic minority background. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average with very few at the early stages of learning to speak English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Publication date ... 18 July 2013

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

St Thomas Becket is an outstanding school committed to excellence in spiritual, moral, social and academic education. It is a warm and welcoming school reflecting a strong emphasis on teamwork. The Catholic identity of the school has a very high profile and is present in the school's daily life. The inspirational Headteacher leads by example and his vision is shared by the whole staff and governors. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Parents are very supportive and appreciative of what the school does. There was a very high return of the parent questionnaires almost 100% positive. One parent wrote: *"The school engenders an environment where the children are able to grow spiritually and gain a Catholic education. There is a strong Christian ethos and children are encouraged to be kind and respectful."* Developmental marking needs to be consistent across the school to ensure all pupils progress well with their learning. The good practice of using level descriptors in the pupils' books needs to be extended to all classes so pupils know how to improve. The school has made an excellent start in introducing 'Come and See' and this needs to be maintained. Areas of development raised in the last inspection have been fully addressed and the school has an excellent capacity to continue to maintain high standards and improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure developmental marking is taking place across the school and that it is consistent.
- Disseminate the good practice of using level descriptors in pupils' books across the school ensuring pupils know how to improve.
- Continue to implement 'Come and See' Religious Education programme effectively.

Publication date 18 July 2013

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

GRADE 1

The headteacher has a clear vision of Catholic education which is shared by the whole school community. There is a firm commitment from governors and staff to ensure the Catholic nature of the school is strongly evident and modelled by all staff. Gospel values underpin the life of the school. The school's mission statement is evident in the school and pupils have written their own class versions of it and displayed them. Rigorous self-evaluation has led to effective strategic planning. Monitoring processes have a positive impact on high standards. Pastoral care is excellent. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school and visit often. The parish priest is extremely supportive of the school and is a frequent visitor. He plays an important role in the pupils' spiritual growth by celebrating Masses and liturgies. Relationships between staff, pupils and parents are excellent. Parents' views are actively sought and valued. One parent wrote: *"This school is excellent and is exemplary in teaching children about Catholicism; brilliant actually."* The Catholic identity of the school is evident in the many high quality displays around the school. Opportunities for spiritual and moral development are outstanding and delivered through the curriculum, ethos and worship. The school has strong links with the local Catholic primary and secondary schools and the Diocese. The school website is excellent and informative. The Religious Education room on MLE (Managed Learning Environment) is an outstanding interactive resource for parents and pupils with links to the parish website.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and actively promote spiritual and moral development. The prayer life of the pupils is a real strength of the school. The quality of written and spontaneous prayer is outstanding. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of prayer and know the traditional prayers of the Church. There are opportunities for prayer throughout the school day as well as in Religious Education lessons. The pupils experience worship through prayer, song, music, drama, dance and storytelling. Whole school and class Masses are regularly celebrated in school and in the church, with parents and governors welcome to attend. Pupils walk to the church and use it as a resource to enhance the curriculum. The school has a well established and broad based programme of collective worship based on 'Here I Am' and the Church's liturgical year. This includes a nativity play and passion play in the church for parents and parishioners and assemblies for Harvest, Black History Month and the Year of Faith. Detailed termly plans are in place which are regularly monitored and assessed. Pupils are encouraged in November to think of deceased relatives by adding their names to a book of remembrance and have the opportunity to reflect and pray. Provision is enhanced by visits to Aylesford and Wintershall and by the visit of the Ten Ten theatre group. Key Stage 1 pupils' visit to the church for liturgy, activities and a picnic during Religious Education week further enhanced provision for pupils and the pupils were keen to tell us of their morning there. Focal areas are well resourced to reflect the current topic and artefacts from them were used in all Religious Education lessons observed. The most effective focal areas were interactive with evidence of pupils' own work, simple and uncluttered. There were reflective opportunities in all lessons observed and in assemblies. The outside environment is used to enhance lessons by using it for drama groups, for example the re-enacting the arrest of Jesus. The school is in the process of constructing a prayer garden. The assembly seen focussed on giving and receiving and was closely linked to the sacrament of the Eucharist. Pupils were attentive and responded well to questioning and invitations for spontaneous prayer. Singing was excellent and obviously enjoyed by all. The introduction of a 'gift box' enabled all pupils to focus and participate and deepened their understanding of a true gift. Pupils' behaviour was prayerful throughout. The Stations of the Cross art work in the hall is

excellent and uses a variety of mediums. The school choir sings at the First Communion Masses, school fair, for the elderly of the parish as well as in Carol concerts and borough music events.

GRADE 1

Community cohesion

The school actively promotes community cohesion through the Religious Education programme and the teaching of other world faiths. Pupils are encouraged to care for one another and to take responsibility through buddy systems and supporting a wide range of charities. These include CAFOD, PHAB, Good Shepherd, and the Demelza Children's Hospice. Visitors from most of these charities have spoken at assemblies. The School Council is actively involved in raising funds for charity and initiates and organises some events. It has a voice in the school and contributes to ideas for clubs. There is an extensive range of after school clubs, including art, sports, science, choir and orchestra. The school is supportive of the local Beavers, Scouts, Rainbows and Brownies groups and some of these have met in the school premises. Provision for teaching pupils about the major world faiths is excellent and is well differentiated so all aspects of faith are covered during the course of the primary years. Excellent resources and staff knowledge of Judaism and Islam contribute to the attainment of pupils. The cultural diversity of the school is celebrated and a sense of belonging fostered so that all pupils have equal opportunities to thrive spiritually, morally, socially and academically in a Christian community underpinned by the Gospel values. There is an active parents' association, to which all parents are automatically members, which works for the good of the school and for others. The association produces a leaver's book for each child containing photos and memories from pupils and staff. The school participates in Croydon Catholic sporting events and staff attend meetings for headteachers, deputies and Religious Education coordinators termly. The school prepares the pupils well for the transfer to secondary school. Ace assemblies celebrate termly pupils' achievement, consideration and effort. The school has links with a school in Normandy through etwinning and has hosted visits of pupils from the Ivory Coast and teachers from France. The school hosts the 'Bounce project' Easter and Summer clubs held for children from all partnership schools and provides funding for these events for children from families with high levels of deprivation. The school's teachers take part in joint inset regularly. As a result of all these activities and commitments the school is truly inclusive enabling the pupils to take a full and active part in their neighbourhood and to appreciate the needs of others in the wider world.

Publication Date: 18 JULY 2013

Religious Education

GRADE 1

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

Pupils attain well in relation to learning outcomes across all areas of the Religious Education curriculum. Pupils enter school with broadly average attainment. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is well above average. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate across all key stages. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behave well in class. A moderated portfolio of work enables standards to be consistent and this is constantly revisited. Opportunities are regularly provided in lessons for moral and spiritual development. Pupils' use of religious vocabulary is excellent. Reception children were talking about the friends of Jesus being called 'disciples'. Tracking over time shows there are no significant variations in achievement between groups of pupils. Higher order thinking skills and empathy were evident in all lessons. In upper Key Stage 2 pupil progress is outstanding. Overall presentation is very good and workbooks show a variety of activities. Interactive high quality displays are evident throughout the school. A Year 6 display: 'Why do we care for others?' focussed on the Demelza House Hospice. One pupil's response was: "They may be vulnerable and that's what God would approve of us doing." Religious Education assessment level descriptors in pupils' books highlighting what the pupil has achieved and what needs to be done to attain the next level are being trialled in some classes and these needs to be implemented across the school so pupils know their target to improve. Pupils can recount Bible stories and apply the knowledge learnt in lessons and assemblies to real life situations.

GRADE 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Overall teaching was good with many outstanding features. In the best lessons the learning objective was clearly shared and emphasised throughout the lesson and evaluated at the end of the lesson. In the outstanding lesson on friendship effective links were made with Personal Social and Emotional development through the use of puppets incorporating saying 'sorry' as part of friendship. Pupils understood Jesus' rule to love one another. One pupil said "love one another, share and care" pupils were encouraged to work together leading a blindfolded pupil through an obstacle course. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Formal assessment using a range of methods has had a positive impact on learning. Planning is supported and well monitored. Ongoing assessment was evident in all lessons. Teachers' knowledge is excellent. In all lesson a prayerful start was observed with pupils offering spontaneous prayers and teachers recapping on previous knowledge. High expectations and challenging activities led to most pupils making good progress. Teachers used a variety of teaching styles including talking partners and role play. Pace was evident in the best parts of each lesson. Differentiation by task was evident in lessons. Support staff are used effectively and valued. Cross curricular links are evident with ICT, Literacy, Geography, Art and Music. In the best examples marking is always linked to the learning objective and developmental. Developmental and interactive marking needs to be addressed so that it is consistent throughout the school. Parents are fully informed and involved in the Religious Education of their children. Homework is regularly set and parents welcome and support this. The 'Wednesday Word' has been introduced and parents commented on how useful it was. The school's website and MLE Religious Education room enable even closer links with the home.

GRADE 1

The Religious Education curriculum

The curriculum more than fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school has just begun implementing the 'Come and See' programme of study and, with additional work linked to the liturgical year, provides a very broad and balanced curriculum. Training has been delivered for the new programme and is on-going.

Resources are excellent and used effectively to enhance provision. Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning because they are given interesting activities which are designed to stimulate interest, challenge and maximise progress. The Religious Education week focussing on the Year of Faith further enhances the curriculum. The very high standard of displays around the school actively supports the Religious Education curriculum and enhances the whole school environment. Education in Human Love is delivered in accordance with Catholic practice and follows Diocesan guidelines.

Religious Education planning and assessment ensures that progression is made within and between all Key Stages and this is subject to regular review. The school organises an annual meetings with the Parish Priest to organise the curriculum for the following year. This strengthens and supports the whole Religious Education programme. The curriculum makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils as they are taught effectively about their faith and to respect the faith and cultures of others.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

GRADE 1

The Headteacher, senior leadership team, Religious Education governor and all governors fully support the new coordinator and give a high profile to this subject and its contribution to the educational mission of the Church. The former coordinator has set up robust systems of assessment, planning and moderating and is giving valuable support to the new coordinator. The new coordinator has built on this work effectively. She is a good role model. She tracks individual progress and gives focussed feedback to staff and follows this up. Her files provide a wide range of evidence well presented. The annual report to Governors by the coordinator is comprehensive and valued. Class sets of Bibles have been purchased and are confidently used by pupils to further their research and knowledge. Regular staff meetings are used for planning, assessment and moderating ensuring consistency of judgements. The coordinator is engaged in collating a deanery portfolio of work. Deanery and Diocesan links are excellent. Inset is planned in line with the school development plan, which has a strong Religious Education focus. The new 'Come and See' is the focus for the next planned sessions so that the programme can be fully launched in the next academic year. Governors more than fulfil their responsibilities regarding monitoring of Religious Education. Members of staff are fully supported in their work. They are all thoroughly committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and to making it a happy and stimulating place in which to work and learn.