



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 142226

**St Mary's Catholic Junior School
Sydenham Road
Croydon
CR0 2EW**

Inspection date: 16th March 2017

Chair of Governors: Ms Marcella Touray
Executive Headteacher: Ms Linda O'Callaghan
Inspectors: Ms Ann Oddy
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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Mary's is a two-form entry Junior Academy and is part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). It opened as a new school in September 2015.

The school is situated in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish which the school serves is Our Lady of Reparation, West Croydon. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 97%. The average weekly time given to Religious Education is 10%.

The school takes pupils from 7 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on role is 237.

The proportion of pupils receiving pupil premium funding is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic heritages is much higher than average. A wide variety of heritages are represented in the school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is higher than average. The amount of pupils with a Statement of Special Needs (SEN) or an Education & Health Care Plan (EHCP) is below national average. The percentage of pupils receiving SEN support is slightly above national average at 13.5%.

The school has an Executive Headteacher who has responsibility for both the Infant and Junior schools in the MAT. This arrangement has been in place since September 2015.

The school has been classed as a new school which opened in September 2015, consequently all data and evidence considered as part of this inspection relates to the period from 2015 onwards. It is therefore not possible to consider year on year trends in pupil outcomes or other school data.

Key for inspection grades

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

St Mary's provides an attractive and well-resourced learning environment with a strong Catholic ethos which pervades all areas of school life. High quality religious artefacts, beautiful Religious Education displays and well-resourced prayer areas encourage pupils to celebrate and reflect on their faith. Standards of teaching and learning in Religious Education are good. Pupils make good progress and enjoy learning about their faith. Lessons are well structured and interesting, enthusing pupils to do their best. School leaders are excellent role models, who are building a cohesive staff team committed to their school community. Governors are conscientious in their role and are frequent visitors to the school. They fulfil their role of support and challenge and are dedicated to their aim of an excellent Catholic education for every pupil. Pupils are happy and enjoy being part of their school community. They are exceptionally polite and well behaved and welcome visitors to their school. Parents speak appreciatively of the school and of the Catholic education it offers. One wrote, "It is an excellent school with lovely teachers who encourage and care for the children." Another said, "I thank God that my child belongs to this school." The school has been through a significant period of challenge and has made a very promising start as a new school.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Enhance the Catholic identity of the school by ensuring prominence of the new mission statement in all school policies and documentation, on the school website and around the school.
- Sustain current standards of progress and attainment in Religious Education by continuing to develop and embed systems of monitoring and assessment and by ensuring consistency of marking and next steps guidance across all year groups.
- Develop school self-evaluation so it is more evaluative and evidence based.

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

As members of a Catholic community, pupils are encouraged to care for each other and for the wider community. 'Being kind' is an important part of school life. Pupils respect and help each other in school and are active in fundraising for a wide range of charities. They are keen supporters of the St Vincent de Paul Society and this is evident in displays around the school. The school has good links with the parish it serves. Pupils regularly attend Mass at the church and the parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school, as well as being a member of the governing body. St Mary's is part of the Croydon Catholic Schools Group. Pupils participate in sporting activities and joint worship events with the other Croydon Catholic Schools. The school also has links with other community schools including a local Muslim school. Links with the Muslim school have included pupils meeting to share their faith journeys and praying together, deepening their mutual understanding and respect for each other's faith. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility for the care and welfare of others. They are proud to serve their school as Buddies, Head Boy and Head Girl, Prefects and Lunchtime Monitors. The school has a newly appointed chaplain who visits the school and is getting to know pupils and staff.

Pupils respect and care for their school environment, including the beautiful prayer areas both inside and outside the school building. They understand the importance of the Church's liturgical calendar and joyfully celebrate its feasts and seasons. They are considerate of each other, welcoming to visitors and appreciate the values of forgiveness and reconciliation. They know that adults in school will care for them and resolve any problems or anxieties they may have. During this inspection pupil behaviour was exemplary at all times.

Parents appreciate the Catholic education the school offers. Questionnaires returned as part of this inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

In 2015 pupils achieved well in Religious Education, with the great majority reaching age related expectations. Results in Religious Education were similar to results in other core subjects. Pupil progress was also good. However, as the school was a new school in September 2015, evidence relates to only one year's data. Data is not available to indicate trends across three years. It is important that the school maintains its current high standard in future years.

Pupils are appropriately supported to achieve their best. Other adults in the classroom provide encouragement and help whilst encouraging pupils towards independence in their learning. Thus, all groups of pupils achieve well in Religious Education, including those for whom pupil premium funding is received. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to do well. They are attentive in lessons and know that Religious Education is important to their own lives. Pupils spoke confidently about their Religious Education lessons and showed a love of the Bible. They enjoyed learning about Jesus and the saints and being given opportunities "to think deeply about things." They experience a wide variety of cross curricular enrichment activities and commented on how much they enjoyed role play and art as part of their Religious Education studies.

All groups of pupils are enabled to access the Religious Education curriculum and realise their potential. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils take a pride in their work and relate Religious Education to their own experience.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

The school's programme of Collective Worship enables pupils to celebrate the liturgical feasts and seasons and to feel part of a worshipping community. Planning ensures that Collective Worship is well structured, offering pupils opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection as well as joyful participation. Pupils respond well, acting with respect and reverence, recognising the importance of these occasions in the life of their school and in their own lives.

The act of Collective Worship observed as part of this inspection was of very high quality. It was led by pupils who were confident and committed to conveying the Gospel message. Those present responded well, with an atmosphere of prayerful participation, including joyful singing. Pupils acted with reverence and respect throughout the assembly, including when arriving and departing from the hall. Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their assemblies, to lead the school in prayer and to compose their own prayers for use in school.

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

Leaders, governors and managers are deeply committed to the Catholic mission of the school and to raising standards for all pupils. The Catholic life of the school is important to all members of the school community. Effective induction for new members of staff and a review of the school's mission statement has helped to build a cohesive team committed to the school as a Catholic community working for the best for all within it. Governors participate in the school's Catholic life and are frequent visitors to the school. Whilst provision is good, monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of school life needs to be further developed and embedded. School leaders and governors appreciate their wider Diocesan role and know they have a mission to work with other schools. They have been generous in providing school to school support and in hosting numerous visits of staff from other schools, both local and international. Governors are conscious of their duty to ensure that all pupils are enabled to achieve their potential, in particular those from vulnerable groups. Whilst they have a clear vision of the school's mission and are committed to its implementation, it is essential that the mission statement is clearly articulated in school policies and documentation and around the school, so that it is seen to be at the heart of school policy and practice.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders and managers are committed to the importance of Religious Education in the school curriculum and to achieving high standards for all pupils. This is reflected in the curriculum time provision, resources provision and staff training. The monitoring schedule for Religious Education includes learning walks, lesson observations, planning and book scrutiny. The results are discussed at senior management and staff meetings and inform development planning. The school should now ensure this evidence is also reflected in its self-evaluation document. The school development plan clearly identifies priorities and outlines the steps towards addressing these, noting milestones and responsibilities.

The Religious Education subject leader is conscientious in his role, providing support to staff, attending training and monitoring provision and standards in Religious Education. Moderation of assessments is well established, with moderation in school and at Deanery level validating staff judgements. Governors receive regular reports of pupils' progress and attainment. Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school is an established agenda item for Governing Body meetings. Close monitoring by governors will help to ensure that the current standards of progress and attainment in Religious Education are maintained to provide evidence of sustained improvement.

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

Four lessons were observed as part of this inspection. Standards of teaching and learning were securely good.

All lessons began with an opportunity for reflection and a prayer, creating a special atmosphere. Lessons had a strong scripture basis and fostered the development of religious literacy. Pupils enjoyed their lessons and worked well. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and used questioning effectively to facilitate and check pupils' understanding. Open ended questions helped pupils to think deeply and explore their understanding. Careful planning and differentiated activities ensured that all pupils' needs were met. The school has a planned programme of assessment. Assessment tasks take place termly. Moderation of these is done internally at staff meetings and externally at coordinator meetings.

Religious Education has a similar assessment schedule to other core subjects. Data is collected and pupil tracking allows each pupil's progress to be monitored and support put in place where appropriate.

Marking in pupils' books shows some evidence of a dialogue between teacher and pupil and in some cases 'next steps' marking gives pupil's suggestions regarding improvement. This should now be extended to ensure consistency across all year groups. The school should also consider introducing peer and self-assessment to foster independent learning skills.

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

The school follows the 'Come and See' programme of Religious Education, enriched by cross curricular links where appropriate. Curriculum time allocation is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

Planning ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Assessment informs planning and helps to monitor and track pupil progress.

The curriculum provides progression for pupils' learning and builds on their own experience and prior learning. It offers opportunities for prayer and reflection and helps pupils to explore and develop their spirituality.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and appreciate the importance of Religious Education to their lives and to the school community.

The study of other faiths is well established. Pupils' knowledge of Islam is enriched by the school's links with a Muslim school. Pupils understand and appreciate the need to respect the religious beliefs and practices of others. Relationships and Sex Education is in line with Diocesan policy and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship is an integral part of school life. A range of opportunities offers pupils the chance to experience the liturgical life of the Church and to become familiar with its feasts and seasons. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their own prayers as well as joining in the traditional prayers of the Church.

The school's Collective Worship is well planned. It is linked to scripture and offers opportunities for reflection. It helps pupils to apply the scripture message to their own lives, fostering their spiritual and moral development. Parents and carers are often invited to join the school in its liturgical celebrations. The act of Collective Worship observed as part of this inspection was well attended by parents. Prayer is also an essential part of school life for staff and governors, who always begin meetings with prayer, building on their sense of community. Beautiful prayer focus areas are a feature of every classroom. All include high quality resources, reflect the Religious Education topic being studied and have examples of pupils' work and pupils' own prayers. It is notable that they also reflect the individuality of each class and are very personal to each one.

Pupils are skilled in planning and leading Collective Worship and enjoy being of service to their school. Collective Worship also reflects the many cultures represented in the school, featuring prayers in different languages.