



Archdiocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Durants Road , Ponders End
Enfield, Middlesex
London EN3 7DE
Telephone: 020 8804 2396

DCSF Number: 308 3500

Headteacher: Ms Maeve Creed
Chair of Governors: Mrs Marie Negus

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 25th March 2009
Date of previous inspection: 17th October 2005

Reporting Inspector: Mr. Sean Flood

Description of School

St Mary's is a large Catholic primary school situated in the London Borough of Enfield. It is a very popular school in the community with a rising roll. In February 2009 there were 397 on roll, 99% of whom are Catholic pupils. The majority of the families come from the local parish of Mary, Mother of God. The school enjoys very close links with the local parish. The school has experienced some difficulty in recruiting teachers in the last few years and has been through some challenging times owing to illness and deaths within the school community. 93% of the teachers are Catholic. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 13% which is below national averages. 65% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and 26% of pupils do not have English as a first language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs at 7% is well below national and local averages. The school's overall deprivation factor is deemed to be very high and twice the national average. The Mission Statement of the school is: "St. Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment". The school is very proud of its own motto which has recently been modified by the School Council and says: "Love, Listen and Learn"

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St. Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school in almost all aspects of its daily life. The exemplary behaviour of the pupils and the excellent communication at all levels are noteworthy aspects of the school. The commitment in the school to Catholic education and its values is very evident in the high quality displays, prayer corners and religious artefacts seen around the school. Standards are at least good in all classes with very good achievement seen in many classes. The children get an excellent start in the nursery and are quickly introduced to the prayer life of the school. Teaching is at least good in all the lessons seen and some lessons had outstanding features. The curriculum is meticulously planned and assessment is developing well to aid further pupil progress. The school's own self-evaluation is a model of good practice and mostly very accurate. There are opportunities at every age and key stage for spiritual and moral development and the prayer life of the school is equally outstanding. Links with other faiths and the teaching about other faiths needs to be further developed in the school. The headteacher, who is also the religious education co-ordinator, is a model of good practice in developing the Catholic life of the school and her leadership of this key area is also outstanding. She is very well supported by an experienced governing body. Links with the adjacent parish are very close and are very fruitful. This is a very friendly and welcoming school to parents and visitors alike.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress on all the key areas identified in the previous report. The school has reviewed and completed the SEF 48 to a very high standard over the last few years. A special statue of Mary was commissioned and painted for the school in 2007 and this has been located in the school's entrance to highlight the role of Mary as patron of the school. The longer lessons in religious education have been monitored and reviewed by the school and

this issue has been addressed. The school has maintained high standards of presentation and written work across the school as evidenced by this inspection.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school clearly has a very good capacity to improve. The head, staff and governors share a strong and united sense of purpose for the further development of the school. Governors play a key role in the success of this school and provide a very good balance of challenge and support. They are actively involved in formulating the policies and practices of the school. The school has very detailed and coherent development plans which link together well. The schools self-evaluation process is very thorough, highly developed and mostly accurate. The community benefits greatly from the local church and enjoys fruitful links at all levels. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the life and work of the school. Staff all share high expectations of their pupils and there is most certainly no complacency within the school. The opportunity to develop the new building will also greatly help the school in its development as will the new information centre. Capacity to improve is therefore judged to be outstanding.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce more creativity into the teaching and learning of religious education lessons by promoting greater use of ICT and new technologies
- Review and develop further the teaching about other faiths within the school to ensure adequate coverage and to increase pupil knowledge and understanding of the wider world

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management is outstanding in this school. Planning and assessment of religious education is exemplary. The school has a very clear vision of what it wishes to achieve for its pupils and the headteacher drives this vision forward into daily practice. The headteacher herself provides outstanding leadership for the Catholic life of the school. She is also the religious education co-ordinator for the whole school and shares this role with a strong senior management team. She is a fine leader of the teaching of religious education in the school. The governing body are also very involved in a supportive way and are kept well informed about the religious life of the school. Staff morale is high and staff are fully committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. Relationships at all levels are very good and the school ensures that there is close communication between the home, school and parish. Parents are equally very supportive of the Catholic life of the school and its mission. The school has assessed itself as outstanding in its leadership and management and this inspection confirms that judgement.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer and worship is outstanding in the school and the school is keen to develop this even further. The prayer and worship currently provided for the children is of a very high standard. The local parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and plays a key role in

the liturgical and sacramental life of the school. The school enjoys very close links with the parish and Masses and Benediction are celebrated both in school and in the church. During the course of this inspection, the whole school celebrated a joyous Mass in the church celebrating the Annunciation. Pupils are given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent and regularly contribute to and participate in parish services. Parents are invited to attend assemblies, worship and liturgies on a regular basis. The statutory obligation to hold a daily act of collective worship is being fully met. Prayer and worship is very well developed in this school and also makes a very good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Displays in the school are imaginative and challenge pupils thinking. Displays are generally of a very high standard indeed and the artwork and religious artefacts of the school greatly enhance the sense of pupils' awe and wonder. The children quickly learn the traditional prayers of the church in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of pupils and give them time to compose, reflect, write and say their own personal prayers. The school has used prayer very effectively in helping children cope with some difficult and sad issues over the last few years. Prayer and worship is integral in the life of this school.

Grade 1

How well does the school/college promote community cohesion

The school is fully committed to promoting community cohesion. Pupils are encouraged to value one another, be tolerant and celebrate diversity through participation in a wide variety of events. Among these are Black History Month, SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) sessions and through pupils taking part in sporting and other events. Some pupils take part in a local Children's Area Partnership. The school is fully inclusive and is equally committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils. The school supports the work of CAFOD and they are also currently collecting for The Manna Centre in Bermondsey. The teaching about other world faiths is not sufficiently developed in the school and key learning opportunities are being missed. Links with other local faiths also need to be forged as this area is not currently being adequately addressed. Parents are kept well informed about the school and participate as volunteers to help out.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

The school clearly has high standards in religious education. Pupil achievement is, in most classes, above national and local averages in relation to their capabilities. Pupils engaged well in all lessons seen and behaviour was outstanding in the school. Children worked well together and were eager to collaborate and co-operate. Pupils' religious literacy is of a very high standard. Even the youngest pupils were eager to share their ideas in an open and friendly manner. Relationships at all levels are very good. The depth of coverage of religious education is extensive in this school. In the nursery the children complete portfolios of early work and now have their own religious education books. Scribing is used very effectively with the youngest children as is the use of photos. In Key Stage 1 the children produce a very large amount of work compared to most children of their age. Some thoughtful reflections on the theme of Journeys were seen in year one's work and some very good independent writing on the life of

St Paul was seen in year two. This good reflective work continued into Key Stage 2 with some impressive writing on Communion and Growing themes. One of the keynote aspects of the standards of the pupils was the challenge set for them by the teachers, thus enabling the higher achievers to progress even faster and to challenge the thinking of all children. Some of the older children were also given time to compose their own prayers and mantras, which were all of a high standard. Religious education clearly enjoys a very high profile in this school.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching was at least good in all lessons seen with some outstanding features evident in some lessons. Teacher planning is of a very high standard and clearly allows for differentiation and progress for pupils of all abilities. Assessment is exemplary and taken very seriously in the school. Teachers use the new levels of attainment to inform the children's learning. Marking and assessment of pupils work is reviewed on a termly basis. Targets are set for children within their books and older pupils engage in meaningful self-assessment. Work is nearly always carefully marked and annotated focussing mainly on the learning objective. Praise is used in a constructive manner and the challenge provided in some classes is a very noteworthy feature of the school. The headteacher carefully monitors the quality of teaching and learning in religious education and keeps a firm grip on all developments providing a good balance of challenge and support for teachers. Where teaching had outstanding elements the teachers listened carefully to pupils responses and then asked effective questions. These teachers also used ICT in a creative fashion to enhance pupil's knowledge and understanding. This area of ICT is one the school needs to develop further to ensure even greater opportunities for learning for all pupils. Teaching assistants play a very effective role in most classrooms seen. Parents are kept very well informed about school life via newsletters and regular consultations. The school evaluates its own teaching and learning as good and this report concurs with that judgement.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The school uses the "Here I Am" programme of study and is fully inclusive. This scheme fulfils all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is currently timetabled and being implemented for religious education and the school is therefore in compliance with all diocesan requirements. The school carefully monitors the length of lessons to ensure good practice is maintained. Religious education is well resourced as a core subject and this is evident in the displays around the school. The school places a strong emphasis on moral, social and cultural development and this is reflected in the curriculum provided. The school has enriched its curriculum by becoming a "Thinking" school and utilising the work of Edward de Bono in religious education lessons. Plentiful and varied opportunities are provided for spiritual development in both class and group settings.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The headteacher, who is also the religious education co-ordinator, demonstrates outstanding leadership and direction of the Catholic life of her school. Religious education has a very high profile across the school. She leads by her own example and is a very good role model for staff

and children. She is assisted in this task by a strong senior management team. The governors are very supportive and are kept well informed of all developments within the school. Links with the parish are well developed and links with other faith communities in the area need to be developed. The parish priest is a very frequent and welcome visitor to the school and plays a key role in the school's success. The school eagerly awaits its new building and enhanced facilities as work starts imminently. The school leadership has ensured excellent communication between the home, school and parish, and this has helped the school prosper and thrive during some difficult and challenging times for the community. Leadership and management of religious education is outstanding in this school.

Grade 1