



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 100725

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School
Dunfield Road
Bellingham
SE6 3RD

Inspection date: 11 March 2013

Chair of Governors: Mrs J Gulczynski
Headteacher: Mrs H Jarvis
Inspectors: Mrs J Lenahan
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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Lewisham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and maintained by Lewisham LA. The principle parish, which the school serves is Our Lady of the Annunciation and St Augustine, Beckenham Hill. The school is oversubscribed with the proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics currently at 91%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to teaching Religious Education is 10% in Key Stage 1 and 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 202 plus 42 who attend the nursery part time. The school is situated in an area of considerable deprivation with data placing it on almost double the national index. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Around 23% of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register and two pupils have statements. 91% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups of whom 24% speak English as a second language, which is well above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE
2

St Augustine's is a faith community delivering Catholic education at a very high level. The school is outstanding as a Catholic community due to effective leadership from governors, headteacher and the senior leadership team who are instrumental in upholding the school's ethos. The inclusion of all pupils is central to the school's mission and this is fulfilled in the explicit manner by which caring relationships nurture the gifts and talents of each individual from the earliest stage of school life. High expectations and calmness are tangible features of the school. Staff work as a cohesive team to create a welcoming, purposeful and stimulating learning environment. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are aware that 'forgiveness and reconciliation' are key qualities in forming friendships and they demonstrate respect for one another, which in turn manifests itself in the happy atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Close links with the parish are fostered with staff and pupils benefiting from the dedicated support of the parish priest and deacon. Community cohesion is outstanding as its provision is broad, child centred and innovative. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent with a specific monthly focus on the gospel values of faith, hope, love, respect, gratitude, honesty, forgiveness, thanksgiving, perseverance, patience and co-operation. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good but there needs to be more opportunities built into the curriculum for personal reflection through prayer. High profile is given to Religious Education and the subject is well led, resourced and managed. The issue raised in the previous inspection (September 2007) with regard to incorporating opportunities for pupil discussion in lessons has been successfully addressed. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding in Key Stage 1 but there are some areas to be addressed to match this high level in Key Stage 2. The school has good capacity to improve due to accurate self-evaluation of its strengths and areas for development.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Review the programme for collective worship and prayer to include a written policy which includes a focus on extending opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development.
- Focus on raising teaching and learning standards in Key Stage 2 from good to outstanding through more achievable learning intentions and better pace.

The Catholic life of the school

GRADE 2

Leadership and management

The leadership of the school is strongly focussed on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the personal development of pupils. The headteacher and senior leaders have, in their few terms in office, formed an effective partnership for promoting the Catholic life of the school and have high aspirations of raising standards even further. The mission statement underpins the school's policies and practice. Pupils are fully aware of its guiding principles. The headteacher has introduced a whole school monthly focus linked to promoting Gospel values. This innovation is very effective as it has an impact on pupils' moral development as well as offering opportunities for curriculum enrichment, such as the exploration of 'forgiveness' using bible quotations and links with the lives of St Augustine, Mahatma Ghandi and Alexander Pope. Parents interviewed were supportive of the school and appreciative of the commitment and dedication of staff and on their availability and accessibility. This positive feedback was backed up in the responses to the questionnaire, which were overwhelmingly supportive. A parent summed up the collegiate view by stating that: "the school promotes a strong Catholic ethos, which encourages and nurtures the children to have strong moral values and responsible attitude towards others". Governors are pro-active and fully involved in maintaining the ethos and monitoring policy and practice with 'Governor's Mornings' incorporated into their schedule so that they have first-hand experience of the school in action. Links with the parish are good and serve to give a sense of community and shared purpose. School newsletters and website are used very effectively to link school and parish events. The parish priest and deacon play a significant part in the Catholic life of the school and their contribution is greatly appreciated by staff and parents. The school is currently considering sending home the published 'Wednesday Word' each week to further enhance home, school and parish links. The school supports the First Eucharist programme by backing up the church led programme in school. Policies and procedures to support pupils' pastoral care are grounded in Gospel values of love and care. Leaders and management foster close links with Lewisham Catholic Cluster Group and the diocese and this serves to enhance the school's commitment to ongoing staff development.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 2

The school gives pupils a wide and meaningful experience of liturgy and worship. There is a good programme for collective worship which is linked to the liturgical year and the Religious Education programme. Pupils are encouraged to compose private intercessions orally and in written mode. Examples of these are evident throughout, such as those linked to the 'Year of Faith' display, Lenten promises and prayers for those less fortunate in society in the Mission Together appeal. Special liturgies enhance provision, amongst which are the Solemn Easter Liturgical Dance Tableau which Year 6 pupils perform in church, the Key Stage 1 Palm Sunday and Passion Play as well as Nativity and Carol singing. The programme for assemblies is good as they are planned using high quality resources including powerpoint presentations, such as the one observed during the inspection on the theme of creation. The school should consider broadening the topic range of assemblies to include sharing the message of the Sunday Gospel. A further improvement would be to enhance provision for spiritual development by allowing pupils more time for reflection during assemblies and classroom prayer time. One way of doing this would be to extend the significance and purpose of the altars in classrooms. The pupils' understanding of the Mass is exceptionally good because of the dual approach of effective teaching of the component elements of the celebration in lessons and the input of the parish priest in bringing it to life in practice. Although the programme for collective worship is good in content, the school should formulate a written policy so that the key components of listening to the gospel message, reflection and response are standard

elements of assembly gatherings. Parents are welcomed to participate in liturgies and assemblies and to attend school Masses in church.

Community cohesion

GRADE 1

St Augustine's is a fully inclusive school. Community cohesion is an outstanding aspect of the daily life of the school. Cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated. A sense of harmony and respect permeates. Relationships between the school and parish community are outstanding as governors, leaders, staff and clergy all co-operate to give meaningful experiences to pupils in the development of their faith. Leaders ensure that pupils are offered a range of 'real' opportunities to explore the meaning of community in its broadest dimension with varied aspects of the curriculum concentrating on local, national and global issues. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the role of Christians to show concern for the vulnerable in society and they know that prayer and alms giving are key components of acts of charity. In this area, pupils are to be commended in their generous contributions to the Mission Together appeal, CAFOD and 'Mary's Meals', which supports a children's charity in Malawi. Pupils' active participation in events such as parish liturgies, Harvest Festival, 100 Days of Peace opening Mass, Green Chain Project, Carol singing in Bellingham Green, Disability Awareness Day as well as sharing ecumenical, musical and sporting events with local schools all serve to broaden their understanding of community. Pupils' voice is given due respect. Members of the School Council are clear about their role and appreciate that they have a voice when decisions are being made concerning their safety and happiness.

Religious Education

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

The standards pupils achieve in Religious Education are very high given their below average starting points on entry. They are interested in finding out about their faith and are able to express their knowledge, understanding and beliefs. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school and this is evident in their oral responses in lessons and in their written work. Standards and achievements are greatly enhanced through the role of chaplaincy, where the Parish Priest and Deacon are actively involved in leading and supporting the pupils' faith development, for example, teaching the pupils about the rite of baptism, understanding the components of the Mass and the sacrament of reconciliation. This close working relationship between the school and chaplaincy is a real strength. Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. They clearly understand the school's motto "God provides the wind but we must raise the sail" as they know that they need to use their talents in lessons by being "good listeners, asking questions and helping one another".

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 2

Teaching is good overall with many elements of outstanding practice, notably in Key Stage 1. When it is at its best, lessons have concise learning objectives, are well paced with tasks and activities that extend thinking and incorporate a spiritual dimension so that pupils can reflect on their learning. Teaching in Key Stage 2 needs more focus in some elements, placing greater emphasis on promoting the spiritual dimension, more concise learning goals and better pace when planning lessons. Very good use is made of ICT to stimulate thinking. Questioning skills to help pupils recall previous learning and probe thinking are a teaching strength throughout the school. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting teaching and learning so that pupils with SEN have full access to the curriculum. Pupils workbooks reflect a depth of coverage of the programmes of study and incorporate a wide variety of learning experiences; examples of which are: opportunities to write letters, compose prayers and recount bible stories. In the majority of workbooks and in lessons, differentiation is addressed only by outcome. Assessment for learning is embedded in lessons and the school has a good portfolio of moderated work. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are secure. Developmental marking is effective and pupils are given opportunities to respond.

The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 1

The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and the Diocese. This year the school has introduced the new syllabus 'Come and See' and the co-ordinator is monitoring its implementation throughout with ongoing staff training and support. The programme is greatly enhanced by the monthly 'values' programme, which the headteacher has introduced this year. Close liaison with the parish through chaplaincy and participation in the sacramental life of the parish augment provision. The curriculum is also enriched by devotion to the saints and a range of cross curricular links including, literacy, liturgical dance, music and drama. The programme for physical, social, health and cultural (PHSCE) education is cross referenced with the Religious Education and incorporates Sex Relationships Education (SRE) in line with diocesan guidelines. This ensures that staff are clearly focused on their role and responsibility to hand on the faith and the teachings of Jesus to the pupils. A strength of the curriculum is the seamless bond between the Catholic life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Religious Education is given a high profile within St Augustine's and is very well led and managed by the headteacher and subject co-ordinator. Leadership is clearly focused on integrating the school's Catholic mission with the Religious Education programme and in this area they are to be commended on the successful outcome. Another key feature of the leadership is the drive to raise standards and promote the faith development of pupils and in this are leaders are equally successful. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and are committed to improvement within the school. The co-ordinator is very experienced and uses her expertise to guide and support staff. Staff training is ongoing and given due prominence in the annual performance management plan. Robust self-evaluation procedures are in place, which include monitoring and tracking pupil progress. The co-ordinator is also at the forefront of leading diocesan development of assessment procedures. She is to be commended on sharing her expertise with fellow colleagues at diocesan and deanery level.