



DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 118763

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
St Richard's Road
Deal
Kent CT14 9LF

Inspection date: 6 May 2015

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Gabrielle Waters
Headteacher:	Mrs Karen Riddell
Inspectors:	Mrs Angela O'Connor OBE Miss Francis Honis

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Introduction

Description of the school

The school is an academy in the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership. It is in the Deal Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Thomas of Canterbury, Deal and St John the Evangelist, Mongeham and Sandwich. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 35%.

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 185. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is just below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is below average. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is a second language is below average.

Date of previous inspection:

23/06/2011

Overall Grade:

3

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1

Outstanding

Grade 3

Requires improvement

Grade 2

Good

Grade 4

Inadequate

St Mary's, Deal is a warm and welcoming school with a strong emphasis on family. It is an outstanding example of a school totally committed to its Catholic ethos and identity.

Excellent relationships between staff, pupils, parents and parish communities reflect the Gospel values which are implicit in the Mission Statement and lived out in the daily life of the school. The Catholic ethos is apparent throughout the school, and the many attractive and relevant displays give testament to the strong Catholic identity. Although there is a relatively small percentage of Catholic pupils the spiritual life of the school is very strong. There is a strong emphasis on the explicit teaching of Christian values on a regular basis.

The Headteacher motivates the school community and together with the leadership team and governors ensures the continuing development of the school and that it is constantly moving forward. All the staff, teaching and support staff, work together as a team and have high aspirations for all the pupils.

Good teaching, high expectations of the pupils and a calm atmosphere have enabled the pupils to develop good learning attitudes, which further enhance their experience in school

Pastoral care is excellent and pupil's emotional wellbeing is well catered for. Pupils are very well behaved, friendly and polite and are clearly proud of their school. They feel safe, happy and well cared for and the older pupils are very supportive of the younger pupils thus enhancing the family feel.

Parents are very supportive of the school and several commented on the family atmosphere. One parent spoke for many, "I am particularly impressed by the way the school looks after and nurtures its pupils, with a strong sense of family."

There is close liaison between the school and the two parishes.

The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and the school has made very good improvement. The leadership of the Headteacher, ably supported by the leadership team and governors, ensure the school has good capacity to continue to make improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should take the following steps to continue to improve the quality of teaching:

- To continue to develop differentiation by ensuring that all teachers plan a range of activities to meet the needs of different learners, including the most able. A staff meeting initially at the beginning of each topic to plan some activities together would further support the staff.
- To ensure there is a sufficient quantity of work in pupils books. This could be achieved by defining a set amount of work each week and monitoring the workbooks at least once each term.

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

The pupils live out the Gospel values and the school motto 'Together we are a family of God, a family of love and family of learners'. A parent commented, "I have always been extremely impressed by the way the older children care and look out for the younger children. The school really is a family."

Pupils lead and take responsibility for activities which promote the Catholic life of the school.

They are trained as 'Peace Pals' which ensure the Christian values of tolerance, forgiveness and friendship are adhered to in the classroom and playground.

There is a Bible Buddies group of pupils, run by the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher. This allows the pupils to discuss and help plan the Collective Worship, discuss the Gospel for Sunday Mass and complete appropriate tasks.

Pupils are very caring and considerate of others and respond well to the needs of others both in their own community and globally. There is a detailed programme of Charities and projects to be supported during the year such as CAFOD, Water Aid and Children in Need. They respond to major crisis and specific appeals such as the recent earthquake in Nepal. Local charities are supported. For example, the school has a 'Foodbank Friday' to support the Deal foodbank.

The two priests are regular and welcome visitors to school both formally and informally. They work alongside the pupils to produce liturgies and Masses in which parents and the parish communities are invited. These take place in both Churches and provides an opportunity for the school to work with the local community.

The school also enjoys a close relationship with the Sisters from the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions. After a visit to their Convent and seeing their Grotto to Our Lady, the pupils were inspired to create their own Grotto in the school Grounds, which is used regularly.

Links to the Convent are also shown in the beautiful Mosaics outside the Building, which depict the history of the school over the last one hundred years.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Generally pupils come into school with below average ability. They settle well into school and by the end of Foundation Stage have made good progress.

On the whole pupils make good progress across the school.

Following on a dip in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 last year the school undertook rigorous analysis of data. They then implemented end of year targets and pupil progress meetings to ensure that they are on track. Current data shows that standards in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 2 will be in line with national standards.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They are fully engaged and engrossed in their activities. They are keen to do well, focus on the task in hand and are eager to participate and answer questions.

Behaviour was excellent in all lessons observed.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils respond well to Collective Worship with reverence and respect.

The school promotes a different Christian value each term, which gives the pupils a deeper insight into each value and how it is relevant to them in today's world.

In the assembly observed which was on the value of courage, pupils were able to reflect on the meaning of courage. They gave answers which showed their understanding and how they could show courage in their lives today. The singing by both a section of the school choir, and then by the whole school was of a very high quality. The pupils sang with enjoyment and enthusiasm.

Pupils know the formal prayers of the Church which are said at certain times throughout the day. In a Key Stage 1 class, a pupil was able to lead the class in prayer.

Pupils write their own prayers and are given many opportunities to do this.

In each class pupils are able to write prayers and display them on the prayer table. Pupils have the opportunity to take the school prayer book home and are encouraged to write a prayer with their family. This prayer is then shared at Assembly.

Each class has a prayer table which is interactive and where pupils own prayers are displayed. Pupils often take responsibility for preparing the prayer tables. Prayer boxes are currently being developed for each class which will include artefacts and liturgical cloths.

There is also a prayer tree by the main entrance where pupils, staff, parents and visitors are encouraged to write a prayer and display it on the tree.

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 totally committed to the school. The Headteacher, supported by the governors and senior leadership team is driving the school forward with enthusiasm and verve. She provides positive and focussed leadership and she has ensured that the Catholic ethos is apparent in all aspects of school life. This can be seen in the many excellent displays which highlight the Catholic nature of the school. There is a real sense of belonging, community and family which helps everyone to work together for the benefit of all. As one parent stated, "The sense of the school is like a family."

The governors, led by an experienced Chair, are now proactive, organised and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. They work as a team with the school leadership and provide a good balance of challenge and support.

There are good links with the two parishes and their priests. The priests celebrate Mass in school on an alternate basis. The school takes an active role in celebrations in each church such as Nativity and carol services and the school choir often perform at church

The First Communion programme, run in the parishes, is well supported by the school.

Relationships with the parents are very good. They are kept well informed and they are very supportive and are regularly involved in the life of the school. The parent questionnaires shared one hundred percent proclaimed their support and affection for the school with many positive comments. One parent said, "My children have a strong sense of community, respect and belief as a result of being at St Mary's."

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

The Religious Education Coordinator has been in post for a number of years and is committed to her role.

She works as part of a team with the Headteacher and a governor to monitor the Religious Education curriculum. This is done through lesson observations, planning and book scrutiny and monitoring of assessment.

Assessment has developed and is now more robust with a comprehensive tracking system and analysis of data.

The Coordinator supports new staff. She has led staff meetings on assessment and taken part in school moderation of work.

Audit days are held three times a year and the coordinator feeds back outcomes to the staff.

She attends Diocesan coordinator meetings and Deanery cluster groups.

Governors are kept well informed of the progress and development of Religious Education, through regular meetings and information disseminated at governor meetings.

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

Overall the quality of teaching is Good with some Outstanding features.

Where teaching is Good or better several elements are in place.

Pupils are engaged and participate fully in the lesson. They are focussed on their work and stay on task throughout the lesson, including when they take part in paired discussions. Teacher's good questioning skills elicit good answers and encourage the pupils to think more deeply. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure there is a good pace to each lesson. The pupils have good prior learning and this is steadily built on in each lesson.

Teaching Assistants are well deployed. They have a good rapport with the pupils providing excellent support where necessary so that all pupils can access the curriculum.

Lessons started with a lit candle, a period of reflection and a recap of previous work. Technology was well used to develop pupils' understanding and as a starting point for discussion. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson on Jesus invitation to follow him, a short video put this into a modern context. This allowed the pupils to discuss what their own response might be.

Pupil workbooks were of a variable nature. There was good work seen but in some year groups there was not always a sufficient quantity of work to reflect the good learning taking place in the classrooms.

Although some tasks in the workbooks were differentiated by outcome, the next stage of development is to ensure there is differentiation by task to meet the needs of all learners. Assessment for learning follows the school policy. Some examples of interactive marking were seen and this good practice should be consistent across the school.

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

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishop's Conference and ten percent of the timetable is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education.

The school uses 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' and this scheme provides good support for the staff.

Other faiths are taught through designated Faith Weeks. The work from these weeks is then displayed around the school and shared with the pupils and parents.

The curriculum is enriched by the use of role play, computing, art and music, and activities which link the curriculum together.

The Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum is currently under review in line with the new curriculum

There are sufficient books and resources available.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The school meets its statutory obligations for Collective Worship. There is a well-planned programme of Masses, assemblies and liturgies which are central to the life of the school. The 'Bible Buddies' group are able to have a good input into the content of weekly assemblies.

Collective Worship regularly promotes and celebrates many aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

Each class from Year 2 upwards celebrates Mass in school every term. Pupils take responsibility for the Readings and music. There is a good uptake from parents and friends who are invited to participate in various celebrations.

The school choir regularly enhances the quality of worship, either by singing on their own or leading the school community.

The quality of Collective Worship is manifest in the enjoyment and participation of the community.