



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 118765

St John's Primary School
St Elmo's Road
London
SE16 6SD

Inspection date: 17th June 2016

Chair of Governors: Jane McManus
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Executive Headteacher: Janice Babb

Inspectors: Damian Fox
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SECTION 48

St John's is an average size one form entry Catholic primary school. It is situated in the Cathedral Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is in the Southwark Local Authority and is in a Hard Federation with St James the Great Catholic Primary School. The school serves the Parish of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Rotherhithe. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 69%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education in Key Stage 1 and 2 is 10%.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years. There are 230 pupils on roll. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. 9.5% of pupils receive extra support and a further 0.8% of pupils have a statement or EHC Plan. There are 79 pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium.

Date of previous inspection:

5th July 2011

Overall Grade:

2

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 3 Requires improvement

Grade 2 Good

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE

1

St John's is an outstanding Catholic school. Leaders, governors and managers are very committed to the Church's mission in education. The Senior Leadership Team along with the new Federation governing body demonstrate a deep understanding of the Catholic life of the school. They understand the school's strengths and have identified areas for development. Governors ensure that they are fully informed by regular monitoring visits and by challenging and supporting the Executive Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. The quality of prayer and Religious Education in the school have greatly improved since the last inspection. The Executive Headteacher is proud of the school's achievements so far and demonstrates a determination to ensure that pupils at St John's receive outstanding provision for Religious Education and faith development.

Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. The school is inclusive and pupils are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs. They show great mutual respect. Pupils appreciate the care teachers have for them. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

The school's environment has a distinctly Catholic identity throughout; particularly in Lara's Garden, an outside area for quiet prayer and reflection.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Support the new Religious Education Team to develop as leaders in their own right to improve further the academic and spiritual life of the school.
- Continue to develop assessment and tracking procedures to sustain improvements in standards.

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

The school motto is “to love and serve each other.” This is evident in the dedication staff have for the pupils and the positive relationships and mutual respect between pupils. Last year the Governors held a “living out the motto” competition for pupils. The outcome being that pupils now have a solid understanding of what it truly means ‘to love and serve each other.’ Pupils have a secure understanding of the school’s mission.

Relationships in the school are excellent. Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils treat each other with respect and they understand how they can contribute to making the community a happier and safer place. They are proud of their backgrounds and have a strong sense of personal worth.

Pupils happily take on responsibilities which benefit the wider school community. The School Council, the Green Team and a newly established Prayer and Worship group gives pupils opportunities to contribute more effectively to the school community.

Pupils show their concern for the vulnerable within and beyond the own community. Fund-raising for charities is a central part of the school’s mission. Pupils contribute yearly to Lepra, CAFOD and Make a Splash. Many other fund raising events are organised by the School Council and The Green Team.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Standards in Religious Education are broadly in line with English, and in some cases, higher. Considering their low level at entry, most pupils make at least good progress over the school year and some make outstanding progress. Inspectors agreed with the school’s view that standards can improve further. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons. This was evident in all lessons where pupils were always engaged in learning. They apply themselves to the work and appreciate the various activities provided. The written work shows that pupils are proud of their work and are keen to do well.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils are actively involved in preparing and leading acts of Collective Worship. Assemblies are led by The Green Team and the School Council. The school's own observations indicate that pupils participate fully and reverently. They pray through drama, music and, when appropriate, through dance.

In the act of Collective Worship seen, the Inspector was impressed with the way the Head of School intertwined the lives of St John Bosco and a recently deceased Sister who worked in the local community. Both worked with and served vulnerable children. Pupils were clearly moved by the stories and inspired to reflect deeply and sincerely on how they can love and serve others who need help.

Leaders and Managers

Grade

1

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 committed to and are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school. The Governors and the Executive Headteacher have a clear commitment to and vision for the Catholic character and mission of the school. They ensure that they are fully informed of the quality of the Catholic life of the school by visits, discussions and the Headteacher's reports. Governors have responded to the new Hard Federation with a determination for the school to become a beacon of faith in the local and wider area. They are visible in the parish community through their ministries such as reading and leading children's liturgy.

In the new Religious Education team, led by the Head of School, the teacher specifically responsible for Collective Worship and for developing the Catholic life of the school has a detailed plan for worship and prayer. She monitors the quality of the Catholic life and reports directly to the Head of School. It is an effective team and there is outstanding capacity to sustain this over time. A parent said that her child often comes home and talks about the Catholic life of the school.

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

Since September 2014, new governors have joined the school and with school leaders have successfully restructured the leadership of Catholic Life and Religious Education. To address the school's priorities, they have created two distinct roles, the Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education. Senior leaders and the Religious Education Leader monitor and evaluate teachers through lesson observations, feedback on marking and by providing training.

The Head of School leads the Religious Education team very effectively. Her own faith inspires her to do her best for the pupils. She is an outstanding leader in her own right, effective and caring. She has detailed evidence of increasingly rigorous monitoring of standards and is confident that pupils will continue to show excellent levels of progress over their time in the school. She monitors and evaluates standards with an external Religious Education Consultant and the Executive Headteacher. The Religious Education leader acknowledged that tracking of pupils' attainment and progress can be improved further to ensure clearer assessment data to help teachers support and challenge pupils as appropriate. The Religious Education Leader monitors and evaluates standards in Religious Education with Diocesan advisors and the Executive Headteacher. There has been extensive support from an external Religious Education Consultant. A moderation file has been developed to ensure accurate assessment throughout the school. Progress is tracked using the school's assessment software.

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

In the lessons observed, teaching was good and in some cases, outstanding. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and used resources effectively to enhance their teaching.

Pupils are encouraged to learn and are supported and challenged when appropriate. Differentiation is a strength of the school. Pupils are positive about their lessons in Religious Education. Children enjoy their lessons and are highly motivated to achieve.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and it gives pupils the opportunity to respond and improve. This is instrumental in improving progress. Teachers know both their pupils' strengths and where support is needed.

Other adults in lessons are very effectively deployed to ensure that all pupils are able to make progress. Religious vocabulary is used accurately in all lessons by the teacher and the pupils.

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

The school follows the '*Come and See*' programme for Religious Education. The curriculum is enriched through imaginative and well planned activities that engage pupils' interests. They are highly motivated learners. Pupils are enabled to access the curriculum and are supported to do so when appropriate. The '*Come and See*' themes are often used as a basis of assemblies to support the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the faith. Pupils are able to articulate an understanding of how scripture relates to their own lives. Comments such as, "it leads us on our spiritual journey" and "it teaches us how to treat others as we want to be treated," reflect the impact, of the curriculum, in their lives. The teaching of Other Faiths is delivered through the '*Come and See*' activities, assemblies and visits to places of worship. The Catholic identity of the school is evident in the displays which are in every part of the building. Pupils' own prayers are a prominent feature of all displays. Lara's garden is a prayerful and reflective outdoor space for staff and pupils.

Relationships in the school are excellent. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of living by the values of the Gospel.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Prayer and Collective Worship are the foundations of the school day and a key part of school celebration. It makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of pupils. The school's own observations described one assembly as inclusive of all pupils. During the inspection the Head of School delivered an assembly on service to others which inspired pupils to think deeply about how they might do so too. Prayer opportunities for pupils are planned in a way that inspires them to reflect and celebrate with reverence. Attractive displays around the school encourage their prayer life.

The school aims to give pupils a rich and positive liturgical experience so that they can deepen their relationship with God. There is a detailed monthly plan of prayer and Collective Worship. The acts of worship track the liturgical year, for example, children pray the Rosary in Lara's garden throughout October. There is also the Marian procession in May.

International diversity in the school is celebrated in assemblies. Pupils are given opportunities to offer prayers in their own languages. Pupils are given the opportunity to celebrate Mass every Friday.

