

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
URN102909

**St.Mary Magdalen Catholic Primary School
Worple Street
London SW14 8HE**

Chair of Governors	Mrs. Anna Brown
Headteacher	Mrs. Helen Frostick
Inspectors	Mrs. Maureen Sinnott Mrs. Maureen Hughes

Inspection dates 9 June 2008

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**
St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington BR5 2SR
Tel 01689 829331 Fax 01689 829255
Director of Education: Dr Dilys Wadman

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Mortlake Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Richmond LA. The principal parish which the school serves is St. Mary Magdalen, Mortlake. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 88%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in Key Stage 1 and 10% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 187. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 10% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and just over a quarter from other White backgrounds. The area of Mortlake has been identified within the borough of Richmond as being one with pockets of economic hardship. At the same time, there are pockets of high cost housing which contribute to a transient population and fluctuating school roll. Almost a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St. Mary Magdalen's is a good school with many outstanding features, particularly in relation to its Catholic life. The school recognises the uniqueness of each individual and strives to promote their self esteem and self confidence. It is committed to enabling all pupils to reach their full potential socially, personally, academically and spiritually. The care the school provides for its pupils is outstanding. The gospel values of respect, forgiveness and trust permeate the relationships between all members of the School community. These supportive and respectful relationships create an environment where pupils feel safe and happy. The well kept interior and well maintained grounds provide a calm and attractive environment conducive to learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They describe the school as, "a place where everyone works together like a family and where everyone tries to act like Jesus." Pupils are well behaved, polite and friendly. Their smiling faces appear to reflect their enjoyment and appreciation of all the school has to offer them. They have many opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility through the school council and taking leadership roles both within the classrooms and in the school itself. Some pupils participate in the Richmond Pupils' Parliament. The overwhelmingly positive response to the parental questionnaire illustrates parents' appreciation of the school. One parent summed up the general feeling by saying, "The school is a most wonderful example of the Catholic family. Staff are excellent role models, firm but fun, disciplined but forgiving, loving and encouraging. They want to bring out the best in every child." Partnership between home, school and parish is outstanding.

The governors aim to make the school a beacon of excellence within the context of the Catholic faith. They are very supportive and work closely with the headteacher. The school has worked hard to implement the revised levels of attainment. They are also introducing a very effective system of tracking and recording pupils' progress. This is in the early stages of implementation and needs further development if it is to make a significant impact on pupils' attainment. Further moderation of pupils' work should be undertaken in order to strengthen teachers' judgements when carrying out assessment. The school has identified the importance of developing a more creative approach to the teaching of religious education. This has been successfully introduced but now needs further development in order to challenge all pupils but particularly the more able. The issues contained in the last report have been addressed. The honest and accurate self evaluation demonstrates that the governors, headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and have identified the areas for further development. The school has an excellent capacity to improve yet further.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Continue to develop the tracking and recording system of pupils' progress.

Continue to develop creativity in religious education in order to challenge all pupils but particularly the more able.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has a clear vision of the education she wishes the pupils to receive and of how she plans to see the school develop yet further. She works closely with the deputy head who offers her able support. The caring ethos of the school is outstanding. The values of respect, co-operation and inclusion are evident in the relationships between all members of the school community and nurture the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The governors are committed to developing the Catholic life of the school. They are involved in the biennial review of the mission statement, in the appointment of staff who will maintain the Catholic ethos of the school and in acting as 'critical friends' to the headteacher. They attend Masses and liturgical celebrations. The parish priest is the governor with special responsibility for religious education. The mission statement is clearly evident in the daily life of the school. It is successfully shared with all members of the school community. The pupils have their own mission statement which helps them to understand what it means to be part of a Catholic community. Their attitude and responses illustrate the fact that they are very aware of the content of the mission statement, which is regularly shared with them. For example, one pupil remarked. "We try our best, we work hard and we care for each other." The very attractive displays both in the classrooms and main areas of the school are often linked to the current religious education topic and mark the school as distinctively Catholic. Of particular note is the display in the entrance hall which illustrates the partnership between school and parish and the Holy Communion banner which was produced by the pupils of Year 3 and their parents.

Grade 1

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Prayer and worship are seen as central to the daily life of the school. There is a carefully planned programme of assemblies, Masses and liturgies, which is rigorously monitored by the headteacher. They are closely linked to the 'Here I Am' programme and the liturgical year. The prayer areas in the classrooms and the hall provide pupils with many opportunities for prayerful reflection. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of prayer. This includes some opportunities for personal reflection but pupils should be guided to use these more effectively to deepen their personal relationship with God. The pupils learn the traditional prayers of the Church and are encouraged to compose their own. The school is introducing pupils to the concept of a "sacred space". In both key stages, outstanding examples were seen of teachers creating this space through candles, music and artefacts. Of particular note, is the ongoing creation of a multi-sensory garden. The assembly attended creatively reinforced the current 'Here I Am' topic of Thanksgiving. Through a variety of imaginative activities, pupils were helped and encouraged to reflect on the importance of their hands in daily life. By stressing the importance of using their hands in loving ways, meaningful links were made between the Gospel message and pupils' own lives.

Grade 1

Community Cohesion

St. Mary Magdalen's is an inclusive school which has been awarded extended school's status in recognition of their reaching out to the wider community. They have a successful record of integrating disaffected pupils from other schools into their positive ethos. The school is committed to giving pupils a respect and understanding of the beliefs of others. Pupils' moral development is fostered through this ethos. Pupils are encouraged to develop respect for and understanding of other faiths through the study of other religions and, in particular, their festivals and celebrations. Pupils are aware of the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves. They support a wide range of charities such as Cafod, N.S.P.C.C, Children in Need and the H.C.P.T. The school has close links with the nearby Anglican Church, whose minister leads an assembly once a term. Local state schools are often invited to share the sporting and educational opportunities offered at St. Mary Magdalen's. There is a successful breakfast club which often has an international dimension to celebrate the special foods of some of the nationalities within the school. The home, school and parish partnership is outstanding and nourishes the pupils' personal development. The parish priest and pastoral assistant are regular and welcome visitors to the school and their educational and pastoral contributions make a significant impact on the life of the community. Preparation for the First Sacraments takes place in the school but there is close liaison with the parish.

Grade 2

Religious education

Achievement and standards

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. They settle quickly and by the end of Key Stage 1 reach levels that match national expectations. Progress is continued throughout Key Stage 2, especially in the upper classes so that many pupils achieve above average levels of attainment by Year 6. Although a personalised learning approach makes an impact on the achievement of those experiencing learning difficulties, it does not always ensure that the more able pupils reach the same levels they attain in literacy. However, their verbal skills show a mature understanding of religious concepts. They are able "to think beyond the literal". For example, pupils in Year 6 during a discussion about a rock on the prayer table, which was a crystal commented that, "we are not always perfect and don't always show our beautiful side". They also understood that it was important not to judge by what you see. Pupils have outstanding speaking and listening skills. They have an extensive religious vocabulary which is systematically developed in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 knew the meaning of 'Eucharist', 'Preface' and 'chalice'. Pupils are able to link their learning to their own lives. For example, a pupil in Year 1 said, "When the grown ups go to Mass and Father Christopher gives them the bread and wine it is like Jesus at the last Supper". The content of pupils' workbooks is of a high standard, especially by the end of Key Stage 2.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching is always good and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils which promote a calm atmosphere conducive to learning. They have very good behaviour management skills and use a wide variety of teaching methods, such as drama, hot seating and talk partners to engage pupils' interest. Planning is meticulous and ensures that there is a good balance between teacher input and pupil activity. Pupils are enabled to extend their thinking through the teachers' outstanding questioning skills. Assessment is well established and pupils are effectively involved in the evaluation of their own learning. The school has successfully introduced the revised attainment targets and more formal assessment is now in the process of development. A pupil tracking system to match that in other subjects is being introduced and, when this is firmly in place, should make a significant impact on pupils' attainment, as under achievement, including those pupils who need to be challenged yet further, will be able to be identified and addressed. Further development of moderation will increase teachers' confidence in their judgements when assessing pupils' work. The marking code is exemplary and does much to identify what pupils' need to do to improve. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress in religious education. They receive helpful information sheets to enable them to offer their children support at home.

Grade 2

The religious education curriculum

The school follows the 'Here I Am' programme, as recommended by the Diocese. On occasions this is supplemented by a range of other teaching resources such as RE Provide. The curriculum builds on the foundation laid at home. It is carefully co-ordinated with personal, social and health education and the social and emotional aspects of learning which are set in the context of Catholic teaching. The school has recently purchased books to deepen teachers' theological understanding. There is a good range of books and resources to support the teaching of religious education. The school is aware of the need to develop more resources for the teaching of other faiths. Good use is made of ICT and of creative cross curricular links to enrich religious education.

Grade 2

Leadership and management

The governors, headteacher and all members of staff work closely together to promote the Catholic ethos of the school and to ensure that pupils receive a firm grounding in the knowledge of their faith. Leadership of religious education is undertaken by the headteacher. The deputy head, who also acts as the assessment co-ordinator, has recently produced excellent documents to record and track pupils' attainment. These are linked to the revised attainment targets. Clear direction for the subject is provided through a range of clear and helpful policies. Religious education features appropriately in the school development plan and the headteacher's performance management. The headteacher carries out regular monitoring of planning, lesson observation, assessment and pupils' books. She attends appropriate training and successfully feeds the information back to the staff. There is a regular programme of training for staff. Of particular note is the recent training on a cross curricular approach. This included art through religious education, music through the Psalms and history through a visit to the Charterhouse. Each year there is a spiritual retreat for the staff.

Grade 1