



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 102909

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Worple Street

Mortlake

London, SW14 8HE

Inspection date: 29th June 2018

Chair of Governors: Mrs Anna Brown

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Frostick

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck
Mr Patrick Moloney

EDUCATION COMMISSION

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR

Tel 01689 829331

Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes



Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Mortlake Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Richmond Local Authority. The school is adjacent to the principal parish it serves, St Mary Magdalen, Mortlake. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 85%, a small drop since the last inspection. 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 255, which has increased since the last inspection. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language (EAL) is above average at 25%. This reflects a change in demographics over recent years which has seen increased numbers of pupils with Catholic backgrounds from Eastern European countries. The school receives funding for 8% of pupils, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is below average. 15.6% of pupils receive extra support in class. Approximately 17% of pupils are from an ethnic minority background.

St. Mary Magdalen's is a National Support School and the Headteacher is a National Leader of Education. The school actively contributes to teacher training and is a partner school to St. Mary's University. The school has Investor in People status, the gold standard for their School Travel Plan and Healthy School status.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary Magdalen's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- at the time of the last inspection the inspectors commented, "St Mary Magdalen's is an outstanding school committed to excellence in spiritual, moral, social and academic education. The Headteacher motivates the school community with her clear vision of Catholic education which permeates the whole school and is shared by the whole staff and governors." It is commendable that over the five years since that report the school has not rested on its laurels and the inspectors have been able to validate that not only does this description still apply, but in fact the school has successfully built on and strengthened its ethos and provision;
- there is dynamic leadership by the Headteacher, who is well supported by her excellent Deputy. The Deputy as Religious Education leader maintains her subject as a core curriculum area. The collegiate nature of the whole staff team who are supported by an excellent governing body reflects a school with an exceptional, unity of purpose;
- the extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate high expectations, together with passion and enthusiasm for Religious Education, to pupils who approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm;
- all pupils are so well catered for academically, pastorally and socially, that they flourish in a supportive atmosphere where everyone is valued and expected to make progress. This is achieved in an old building that is maintained to a high standard, with every space being well used.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

No significant areas for improvement were identified, but the school has a strong capacity for sustained improvement due to the commitment of staff and governors, accurate and reflective self – evaluation, and a continuous drive for improvement that is evident throughout the school. The school should:

- continue to plan, develop and implement new assessment procedures in line with Diocesan guidelines, thereby ensuring that assessment in Religious Education is in line with other core subjects.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

Catholic life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school.

1

Religious Education

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

1

Collective worship

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' collective worship

1

The quality of provision for collective worship

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship.

1



CATHOLIC LIFE

1

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

- St Mary Magdalen's has a philosophy of doing things with pupils and not for them. They view their pupils as stakeholders in their own education and value the ideas and input they bring to enhancing school life.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school and have a deep sense of belonging to their school family. They flourish in an atmosphere where everyone is valued and is expected to achieve. There is an extensive range of extracurricular activities for pupil participation.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary at all times. They are alert to the needs of others and are ready to support each other whenever necessary. At all times, children are encouraged to listen, give thanks and appreciate the need for reconciliation. As a result, positive relationships are very evident as children work and play.
- The school provides many opportunities for personal development and growth and pupils take full advantage of experiences offered, including parish and diocesan celebrations, They are also given many opportunities to lead and participate. Their many roles include being buddies to Reception pupils, tour guides for prospective parents and special visitors, prefects, prayer monitors, councillors (including Richmond Pupil Parliament), captains, Eco Committee members, head gardeners, safety officers, play leaders and librarians. The active student council, with 12 members representing each class from Year 2 upwards are elected at the beginning of the new school year and meet regularly to discuss a wide range of matters raised at individual class councils.
- From discussions with pupils, they feel fully involved in decision making processes and enjoy the varied opportunities to support others within, and beyond, their school and local community. The student council talks with great enthusiasm about the range of fundraising events in which it participates throughout the year. This year the student council has been involved in providing a greater variety of play equipment for lunchtimes and in setting up even more lunchtime and after-school clubs including a gym club. They also agreed that a friendship bench should be introduced in the playground. As a group, they have considered and come to a unanimous agreement about their responsibilities as pupils.
- The pupils enjoy being members of their house inspired by the lives of a martyr: St. Mayne; St. Fisher; St. Campion; and St. Moore. They enjoy having the experience of playing their part as a member of a team. At St Mary Magdalen's the pupils live out the Gospel values.
- The pupils are articulate and reverent with regard to expressing their views and beliefs. They respond well to the challenge of 'Big Questions.' They have empathy for the finer points of Religious Education. The very moving 'Way of the Cross' re-enactment by Year 6 and the Remembrance Service inspired by their school journey to the battlefields of the Somme, illustrate well the pupils' personal responses to their faith.



- The pupils show their faith by the way they live, forming relationships based on Jesus as their role model. The motto of the school, “We seek to bear witness to Jesus Christ,” is taught to the children by asking them in given challenging scenarios, “What would Jesus do if?”

The quality of provision of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.

- The mission statement, “to seek to bear witness to Jesus Christ.” is a true reflection of the core purpose of the school; to enable all children and all staff to be the best they can be, for themselves and for others, using their God-given talents. The wide range of high quality provision facilitates this.
- St Mary Magdalen’s is a school that is extremely committed to Catholic tradition and ethos; displays, artefacts and the many sacred spaces created throughout the school support this. They are of an exceptionally high quality.
- The collaborative nature of the school community and its leadership team is a significant strength of the school.
- There is a strong sense of community in all areas of school life evidenced in the quality of relationships that exist between all stakeholders. The teamwork within the school is a key strength. As one parent said, “Close ties between the Church and the school create a real sense of community which is unusual in today’s society and particularly in London. This creates a real sense of belonging and fosters relationships across the generations.”
- Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the highest levels of support to pupils and there is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy. Pastoral support at St Mary Magdalen’s enables pupils, staff and parents to access help and advice when required and this has a significant, positive impact on pupils and their families.
- Excellent standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through the school’s high expectations, rooted in Gospel values. They prioritise preparing the children to develop as religious and moral citizens, in order to fully participate in a multi-cultural and multi-faith society. The study of other faiths is embedded within the Religious Education curriculum. Educational visits are arranged for the pupils to experience other faiths at first hand and to broaden their understanding of wider faiths and beliefs; Year 3 Jewish Synagogue. Year 4 Sikh Gurdwara, Year 5 Hindu Temple and Year 6 Islamic Cultural Centre. Pupils spoke effusively about these visits and what they had learned. Parents likewise complemented the school for facilitating such visits.
- In line with Diocesan and Government guidance, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is being taught more comprehensively in keeping with the Catholic faith in the academic year 2017/2018 through the scheme, ‘A Journey in Love.’
- The school’s website is excellent, both for the information it provides and use that is made of it to celebrate the religious life of the school. At the time of the inspection, in addition to an outline of Religious Education curriculum provision there were celebratory pictures highlighting recent work by pupils on ‘The Way of the Cross.’



How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school. They demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church and are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. They promote a culture of mutual respect.
- The commitment of the leadership team, to scrutinise and develop the Catholic life of the school, is evident in the School Development Plan. Action plans support this. As well as the Religious Education action plan, the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) is looking at the unique interface of pupils within a faith school as part of the School Development Plan. This is indicative of the fact that developing the Catholic life of the school is seen as everyone's responsibility and that it is at the heart of everything they do.
- Leaders' self-evaluation, which involves monitoring, analysis and self-challenge, is clearly focused on the Catholic life of the school and the Mission Statement. This leads to planned improvements which will further enhance the Catholic life of the school.
- The provision for, and development of, the Catholic life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility. The Headteacher leads by example and is a true servant of the community. Together with senior leaders, she sets high expectations to promote a tangible Catholic ethos throughout the school and ensures all members of the community do their utmost to meet these expectations.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Parents are consulted regularly and they support the school in many different ways. From the point of first contact, visitors and families are warmly welcomed into school and great strides are made to engage parents and carers in school life.
- A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral development are provided for all staff and pupils including 'Come and See' celebrations, daily collective worship and assemblies.
- From reviewing Governing Body minutes and a range of other documentation, it is clear the governing body is ambitious for the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic life as a school improvement priority. Governors make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and are fully involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the School Development Plan. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are frequent visitors to the school and often share in-service opportunities and attend liturgical celebrations. Learning walks have been undertaken to ensure that the school environment reflects its distinctive nature as a Catholic school.
- Governor's Committees work in close collaboration with staff to ensure challenge and support. This ensures that policy and practice support and reflect the Catholic life of the school. This year, the Curriculum Committee has been integral to a successful revision and implementation of the school's Relationship and Sex Education Policy.



- A high number of parental questionnaires were returned and impressively reflected a virtually 100% positive responses. As a parent responded on their questionnaire; “A truly brilliant and inclusive Catholic faith school.” A second noted, “The school offers excellent religious and pastoral education. We are very happy with the links and development of Catholic education. Staff are caring and attentive.”



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils from varied starting points make excellent progress in each key stage. Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. In observations it was difficult to identify pupils with needs due to the discreet support provided and their integration into their peer groups.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, pupils are very aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners. They work extremely well in groups, while independently whilst remaining on task throughout. In general, pupils concentrate very well and sustain concentration throughout their lessons. They have an excellent understanding of how well they are doing; of what they need to do to improve and can articulate how they have made progress.
- It is clear from discussions with pupils, and lesson observations, that they thoroughly enjoy their Religious Education lessons. They particularly enjoy the variety of teaching styles deployed to engage and enthuse them. They work hard, enjoy challenging activities, and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning with behaviour in lessons being excellent. Low level disruption is very unusual.
- Pupils' achievement and attainment, as indicated by formal and informal assessment, are very good. These have been sustained over time and show an ever-improving trend. The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and written work is outstanding. They take great pride in their work and enjoy recording it in a variety of ways.
- On the day of inspection, inspectors witnessed pupils enjoying a range of strategies including; group work, reflection time, the use of images, music and talk partners.
- Music is a considerable strength of the school and is utilised well to enhance both lessons and liturgical celebrations. Pupils benefit from strong links with the parish musicians.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The vast majority of lessons are outstanding. Planning for Religious Education at St. Mary Magdalen's is exemplary. The focus for teaching and learning this year has been 'inspirational and creative teaching' with the 'Big Questions' being at the heart of lesson



planning. Planning is thorough and cohesive with progression evident across the school. A planning sheet has been adapted to ensure that the preparation part of the lesson develops pupils' understanding and skills and that the age range, aptitudes and abilities of the children are addressed.

- Implementation recommendations in regard to the 'Come and See' scheme made by the last inspection have been fully addressed. The school uses the 'Come and See' programme of Religious Education enriched by cross curricular links where appropriate. Curriculum time allocation is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Work in pupils' books and teachers' planning show full coverage of the Religious Education curriculum.
- All lessons seen demonstrated exemplary practice and a broad range of teaching strategies. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate high expectations, together with passion and enthusiasm for Religious Education to pupils. Pace is good, effective use is made of technology and interesting activities are provided. Previous learning is built upon. Support staff working in classes are a considerable asset. They work discreetly and are clearly planned for by teachers to maximise their significant impact.
- Assessment takes place during lessons so that teachers can check understanding and build on previous knowledge, as well as in formal assessment tasks. Formal assessment takes place at the end of each topic. Moderation is undertaken regularly internally and at deanery level to validate the accuracy of teacher judgements.
- Planning is detailed and takes into account the differing needs of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are very well supported and included. The school has high expectations in Religious Education and has implemented a focus on more able pupils, offering them increased opportunities to access and achieve the higher levels.
- Staff and governors take full advantage of diocesan and deanery training and support in order to raise standards in Religious Education. Continuing professional development (CPD) in Religious Education has a high priority with a joint in-service programme arranged termly between the three local Catholic schools. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is extensive and teachers are confident in their delivery.
- Marking in pupils' books is in line with the school marking policy for all subjects. Marking is regular and affirmative. There is evidence of a productive dialogue between teacher and pupil as well as some guidance regarding how pupils can improve their work.
- An outstanding early years lesson on 'What do you love about the world', moved into the topic of sharing. Pupils sat in a circle with some being given two biscuits and others none. Discussion followed on how they felt and the range of feelings experienced. Spontaneously pupils offered to share their biscuits. One pupil said they wanted to give the inspector a biscuit. There was a strong demonstration of empathy with others.
- A key stage 1 lesson looked at the 10 ways to treasure God's creation. This lesson was marked by pupils being able to demonstrate how they can make a difference in an age appropriate way.



- A key stage 2 lesson dealt with us being ‘Stewards of God’s creation’ and was well differentiated by a ‘round robin’ activity that demonstrated positive working by the whole class together. Another lesson dealt with an understanding of the terminology ‘Common Good’. The teacher skilfully linked this to implications for everyday life, making good use of talk partners. Links to parables known by the pupils and strong cross curricular links exemplifying the fighting of poverty and climate change highlighted both the strong building on previous learning and new learning. A further key stage 2 lesson was impressive in giving pupils a true understanding of pilgrimage. Pupils were able in a number of cases to draw on their own personal experiences and through the school have had the opportunity to experience pilgrimage though visiting local churches.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. They show an excellent understanding of and are deeply committed to the mission of the Church in education.
- Good opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic life and Mission of the school through prayer, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need.
- The self-evaluation form (SEF) is a comprehensive document providing evidence of the school’s monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. Governors are involved in its formulation and ongoing review. It provides a basis to celebrate the school’s strengths, maintain them and strive for even greater things. Alongside this document is another excellent Religious Education Development Plan. The school might consider linking these two documents more closely to make the SEF less summative and more developmental.
- The subject leader for Religious Education has a clear vision for the subject. She leads recent changes well, such as the move to a new assessment framework.
- The Headteacher and Religious Education leader constantly seek to evaluate practice and provision and they work closely with a range of other schools to ensure this. This includes leading and attending Catholic school INSET and training, Catholic Heads’ meetings, Diocesan training and Catholic Schools’ Cluster Meetings.
- The Chair of Governors conducted a Religious Education subject visit and within her report, endorsed the leader’s plan to review Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and the associated policy. The Governors work strategically with the school and their visits are always in direct relationship to action plans. The Curriculum Committee are proactive in addressing the identified need to further develop the teaching of RSE. They worked as critical friends to help to formulate the revised policy.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life is outstanding.

- St Mary Magdalen's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour and consideration of others. From the earliest age pupils act reverently and show respect when participating in Acts of Worship. They listen well and are happy to take part in collective worship, liturgies, Masses and assemblies. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is strong.
- Pupils are familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures. Pupils know the importance of stillness and silence during times of reflection and prayer.
- At appropriate times of the year, including around significant festivals, the pupils are taught about the beliefs and customs of people of other faiths. Differences are celebrated at St. Mary Magdalen's and non-Catholic pupils of other faiths are fully integrated into the liturgical life of the school. As a pupil said, "We do not feel and are not treated any differently."
- On the day of inspection, worship engaged the pupils' interest, inspired reflection and enabled them to respond meaningfully. A Year 6 group had independently planned and delivered a very spiritual class worship. It was outstanding in engaging the pupils in worship creating an atmosphere of true awe and wonder.
- The day of this inspection was a Holy Day of Obligation and the whole school attended Mass at the adjacent Church. The Parish Priest actively supported the pupils in taking a lead in the celebration. Pupils read exceptionally well and led singing that enhanced the prayerfulness of the Mass.

The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life is outstanding.

- Collective worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of collective worship is engaging, and all members of the community speak positively about it.
- Staff, parent and pupil questionnaires and consultations all reflect that collective worship at St. Mary Magdalen's is inspirational. This area of school life is a great strength and is at the core of all that the school does. There is a very strong ethos of daily prayer, collective worship and liturgy in the school. The whole school community is centred by the acts of worship that enable all to come together to be uplifted spiritually and grounded in their beliefs as a school with faith at its heart. Leaders state that the prayer life of the school is a big part of the education it provides as part of the Church's mission.



- Staff have an outstanding understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have good experiences of the Church's liturgical life. This is further helped by the valued input of the Parish Priest.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a good understanding of the purpose of collective worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer. The school has both a pro-forma for staff to record their acts of worship plans, and for the pupils themselves for when they organise and lead acts of collective worship.
- Pupils lead both class and church based Masses. Class based Masses are intimate and help to further knit the family community within the small setting of the classroom. Church based Masses are spiritually reflective. St. Mary Magdalen's has talented staff and pupil musicians who work together to enrich collective worship.
- The school follows the scheme of themes set at the "Come and See" scheme, and particularly for reflection and rejoicing, as well as the weekly Gospel readings in Church. Teachers integrate their Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PHSE) scheme of work and Behaviour Policy. The school's Mission, "to always seek to bear witness to Jesus Christ" is clearly understood by all and is a huge contributory part of the excellent behaviour of our pupils. They reflect on, "What would Jesus do if...?"
- Class prayer areas contain individual prayers written by the pupils. Another special feature of the school's prayer life is the prayer boxes, made by the pupils for one another, as a gift on "meet the new teacher" morning. Spaces for prayer are evident throughout the communal areas of the school. These are changed and augmented according to the liturgical year. During Advent, the Art and Prayer group created a whole school Advent calendar which was placed around the school to provide opportunities for reflection and prayer. Similarly, in Lent the Prayer Monitors helped to create stations where personal, private prayer could take place. Pupils responded thoughtfully and maturely to these opportunities.
- A special feature of the school's prayer life are individual prayer stones. In the Reception class each pupil is presented with a stone to write their name on. The stones are then blessed by the Parish Priest at the beginning of the year. The pupils proudly present them in the offertory at their first school mass. These stones then follow the pupils up through the school and are a focal point of prayer corners and the school's prayer life. In Year 6, the pupils integrate their stones into their leavers' mass and take the stones on with them as they leave.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life is outstanding.

- The Headteacher has a strong understanding of what constitutes excellent collective worship and provides a good role model for other staff. High standards are maintained and insisted upon, and are supported effectively by the Headteacher and staff and in addition through CPD opportunities.



- Governors are key people in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. They hold the school to account for the quality of collective worship. They regularly attend school Mass and other acts of worship and report their findings back to the full governing body.
- All pupils from their earliest years are becoming actively involved in planning, preparing and leading collective worship. This has begun to be embedded across the whole school.