

**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
Of the Education Act 2005
URN 100732

Our Lady and St Philip Neri Catholic Primary School
Sydenham Road
London
SE26 5SE

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Mrs R Keegan
Mr R Sullivan
Mrs B Dowswell
Mrs D Wright

Inspection dates

29 March 2011

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
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Introduction

Description of the school

Our Lady and St Philip Neri is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school situated in the Lewisham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school is maintained by Lewisham Local Authority. The principal parishes, which the school serves, are Our Lady and St Philip Neri and The Resurrection of Our Lord, both in Sydenham. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 99%. 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 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 342. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 20% of the pupils receive extra support in class. About 35% of pupils are White British. Other significant groups are Black British, Black Caribbean and Black African. Few pupils are from homes where English is 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

Our Lady and St Philip Neri is an outstanding Catholic school, which is extremely effective in living out all aspects of its Mission Statement. The school's distinct Catholic identity pervades the daily life of the school and underpins relationships, which are outstanding. It is a caring, nurturing Catholic community, which embraces pupils of all abilities and cultures. All adults work together to secure outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils. They learn in a caring Catholic community based on the Gospel values of love, justice, respect and forgiveness. The pupils' personal response and engagement during religious education lessons and throughout the school is exceptional and they are to be commended for their attitude and their exemplary behaviour. The headteacher is an excellent role model for the whole community. He gives clear direction to staff and pupils and his high expectations empower them to strive for excellence. Very strong liaison with parents and the two parishes the school serves, further nourishes provision and promotes strong community cohesion. The majority of parents are very appreciative of the care and education their children receive. One parent wrote, 'We believe that this school gives the best possible care and gives the children the best start in their journey though life'. The active involvement of the two parish priests and the strong links with the two parishes are strengths of the school. Both priests are regular and welcome visitors and are well known to pupils and staff. Governors are strongly committed to the school. They give very good support and fulfil their roles effectively. Good and often outstanding teaching, together with high expectations ensures that overall pupils make very good progress in religious education and many achieve standards that exceed national expectations. The new programme for religious education is being introduced carefully and staff are being well supported during the early stages of implementation. The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous report. Good systems for self evaluation ensure that the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. Together with the first priority on the School Development Plan, which states, 'To ensure that the Spiritual life of the school remains central to our activities', this ensures that the school has a very good capacity to improve further.

Grade 1

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Continue to embed the new religious education programme, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' and further develop staff confidence and expertise in using the assessment tasks linked to the scheme.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 1

Our Lady and St Philip Neri is a school that puts the teaching of Christ firmly at the centre of all that it does. The strong leadership of the headteacher unites staff in the common purpose of providing the very best all round education for the pupils. The headteacher's clear vision of Catholic education, which is strongly focussed on the school's mission of raising standards and promoting the personal development of learners, is shared by all staff and governors. Pupils clearly love school and are enthusiastic learners. They express views such as, 'teachers make lessons fun' and 'teachers try very hard to make this a better place for us'. All at the school are clearly dedicated to developing the Catholic life of the school. Many beautiful displays in both buildings such as those on Lent and the Stations of the Cross, proudly proclaim the school's Catholic identity. The Mission Statement is a living document, which is clearly visible in the life and work of the school. Parents are welcome in the school and are seen as essential partners in the education and faith development of their children. Governors are strongly committed to maintaining and developing the Catholic ethos of the school. The link governor who is one of the parish priests, is knowledgeable and knows the school very well. He visits the school regularly and meets with the headteacher and co-ordinator and feeds back regularly to the governing body. The active involvement and support of both parish priests is greatly valued and appreciated by all members of the school community. The strong relationship that exists between school, home and parishes is a great strength and is to be commended. It adds greatly to the outstanding spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

Part of the school's mission statement says that it 'Will strive to be a worshipping community and provide opportunities for prayer, liturgy and the celebration of our faith'. Our Lady and St Philip Neri more than fulfils this aim and the provision for personal and collective worship is very good and pivotal to the school day. Assemblies are held for differing groupings of pupils so that provision is age appropriate. The assembly for Key Stage 1 pupils was focussed on the theme of forgiveness and that for Key Stage 2 pupils on Lent and Mothers Day. Both assemblies included an appropriate blend of reading, prayer, drama and music. Pupils were actively involved and took part with confidence. They were attentive, respectful and prayerful throughout the assemblies. The high quality and vibrancy of the music including the singing, and use of various instruments and the brass bands greatly enhanced provision and fully engaged the pupils. The assemblies were linked to pupils own experiences and Key Stage 2 pupils were given time for silent reflection. The prayer life of the school is very strong and is focussed on helping pupils to develop a personal relationship with God. Pupils are given very good opportunities to experience a variety of prayer forms, including the traditional prayers of the Church, reflective and spontaneous prayer and their own

written prayers. Examples of sensitively written personal prayers were evident in pupils' books, in portfolios, on prayer trees and displays. Many prayers show a great depth of pupils' personal response and the maturity of their relationship with God. The depth and engagement of pupils in prayer observed was outstanding. Pupils have the opportunity to attend voluntary prayer times before school during Lent and October. All classes have focal areas for prayer, which are integral to the prayer life of the class. The majority of these areas are attractive and well presented but a few are rather cluttered. The school should now ensure that all prayer areas are of the same high standard and that correct liturgical colours are used. Mass is celebrated at various times during the school year, either for all Key Stage 2 pupils or groups of classes. These Masses take place in the adjacent church or in school and parents are always invited. Younger pupils who are in the school annexe, a considerable distance from the church, have their own liturgies and services, which are conducted by one of the priests. A variety of other liturgies and celebrations take place, such as those for Advent, Lent, Easter and Christmas. The annual celebration in honour of Our Lady is a wonderful whole community celebration involving all classes and large numbers of parents and parishioners. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have reconciliation services in Lent and Advent with the opportunity to receive the Sacrament. Year 6 pupils have a day at Aylesford Priory each year to celebrate and reflect on their time at the school and to look forward to the next stage in their education. Prayer and collective worship at Our Lady and St Philip Neri make a very positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development and their own personal faith journey.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

Our Lady and St Philip Neri extends a very warm welcome to all its pupils, their families and to all who visit the school. Its ethos is warm, supportive and inclusive and the sense of community is particularly powerful. Pupils recognise that they are all members of God's family, so readily show respect and care and consideration for each other. A parent wrote, 'The school instils good Catholic values and teaching to the children, which reflects in their every day life.' Pupils willingly accept responsibility and there is an active school council whose members take their responsibilities very seriously and liaise with class members after each meeting to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to be involved in decisions. The council has been involved in many issues, for example, designing outdoor play areas, choosing charities to support and making the school more eco friendly. Pupils act as various monitors and the monitor display board states, 'Our role is to serve and help everyone in our school family'. Pupils are ready to show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and contribute to a variety of charities in this country and abroad. These include the local hospice, a centre for the homeless, Cabrini children's society and the Christmas shoebox appeal. The school has excellent links with local Catholic schools through a strong cluster, which meets regularly and there are also good links with other local schools. There are very strong links with the local Catholic secondary school and regular liaison takes place. The flourishing school choir and brass bands

perform for other schools, in retirement homes and has recently taken part in some parish Masses. Parents are involved in the life of the school through volunteering as helpers and an active Friends Association. They are largely responsible for the organisation of an annual Cultural week, which celebrates the cultural diversity within the school. The school co-operates and supports the parish in the preparation for First Holy Communion and many staff attend the First Communion Masses. Through their work on other world faiths pupils learn to understand and respect different religious traditions and ideologies. This was seen through an attractive display on Judaism and Key Stage 2 pupil visits to the Bromley Reform Synagogue. Links with an Anglican school in Warrington is giving pupils the opportunity to learn about life in a different part of England. Through one of the teaching staff, links have been made with churches and street children in Guatemala.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 1

On entry to school children's skills and achievements are broadly in line with national expectations and many have some experience and understanding of Church and faith. Pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes settle quickly into the secure and stimulating learning environment created for them. Well planned and focussed teaching strikes a good balance between adult led and independent activities. These young pupils flourish in the warm and positive atmosphere and a firm foundation for learning in religious education is quickly established. A parent of a child in the nursery wrote, "She is able to make the sign of the cross and recite different prayers. She is able to make comments about Jesus and other characters from the Bible...I am really pleased with my daughter's spiritual well being." Good progress is made, as was seen by the knowledge and understanding shown by pupils in a Reception class of the meaning of Lent, the significance of Lenten promises and the resurrection. Throughout Key Stage 1 good progress is maintained and pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. In all classes pupils are building a good knowledge of Scripture and this was evident in lessons and in pupil books. Because of consistently good teaching and high expectations, pupils continue to succeed and make very good progress. A high number reach levels that are well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils throughout the school are articulate and demonstrate well developed oral skills. They are confident to discuss and explain their learning and ideas. Many pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and demonstrate an ability to think spiritually and respond on a deep personal level. For example, pupils in a Year 5/6 class confirmed an excellent knowledge and understanding of all the parts of the Mass. They explained that they weren't spectators but had to respond personally and gave deep responses as to what the consecration means and what they mean when they say "Amen", when receiving Holy Communion. The work in pupils' books shows evidence of a wide variety of recording, for example, narrative writing, leaflets, diagrams, poetry, diary entries and prayers and the use of ICT. The work is of

a high standard and shows progress across the year groups. Presentation is consistently good and pupils clearly take a pride in their work. All pupils have excellent attitudes to their religious education lessons and are highly motivated, engaged and enthusiastic in their learning. Their behaviour is exemplary and they work well in groups, pairs and independently. They listen respectfully to one another and value each other's work and efforts. Across the school pupils are able to make connections between what they learn and their own lives.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 1

The delivery of Religious Education is of a high quality. Lessons observed during the inspection were either good or outstanding and were delivered with commitment and confidence. All teachers have excellent behaviour management skills and very positive relationships with their pupils, which result in the creation of a calm and purposeful learning environment. Teachers' high expectations and skilled teaching lead to pupils' responding very well and demonstrating a keenness to give of their best. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and referred to both during lessons and at the end. Lessons have a good pace and teachers use good questioning to develop and extend pupils' learning. In all lessons tasks and activities were differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils and the more able were suitably challenged. Often activities demand a personal response from pupils and help them to see the relevance of their learning in their own lives and relationships. Teachers use a variety of methods and approaches in order to motivate pupils and maintain their interest. The use of talk partners is used very effectively as was seen in a Year 4 class. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together, and the skilled assistants are well prepared to ensure that pupils with additional needs have full access to the lesson and make good progress. One of the priests occasionally supports lessons in the classroom. The school has made great strides in the development of assessment procedures since the last inspection. Teachers have undertaken moderation of pupils' work and they are more confident in levelling work against national levels of attainment. A portfolio of levelled work has been developed to support staff in this process. Assessment procedures linked to the 'The Way, the Truth and the Life', are now being implemented. Tracking of pupils' work is in place and is in line with the system for the other core subjects. The data is regularly scrutinised by the co-ordinator in order to identify any under achievement by individual pupils or groups. Assessment is sometimes planned for within the lessons, for example in a Reception class and a Year 2 class, classroom assistants were making notes of pupils' oral responses. In a Year 4 class a quiz at the end of the lesson was used to assess pupil progress during the lesson. All pupils' work is marked carefully and there are good examples of teachers posing questions to help pupils to move on in their learning and pupils responding. The school recognises that this needs to be further developed and more consistent across all classes. The school may wish to consider giving teachers the opportunity for peer observation in order to share the outstanding practice evident in some classes. Time for prayer and reflection is an integral part of all religious

education lessons, which contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 1

After a great deal of thought and consultation involving staff, priests and governors, in September 2010 the school changed the programme for teaching religious education from 'Here I Am' to 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. The new programme is being implemented in a measured and thoughtful way with time allocated and planned for staff training, evaluation and moderation. In line with national guidelines, the curriculum more than meets the 10% required teaching time. The curriculum is well planned, builds well on the foundations of home and relates directly to the pupils' experiences. The support and guidance given by the two priests further enhances provision. Parents are kept well informed with regard to religious education through the general school newsletter and a specific newsletter, which gives information on the topics being taught. Further links with parents are developed through the setting of homework, which often includes pupils using research skills and involving their parents. One parent wrote, 'I have learned a lot about my own faith through reading my son's religious education homework'. Some cross curricular links are made with other subjects, with literacy, art, music and ICT enriching the curriculum and making it more stimulating and meaningful for pupils. The high quality music provision contributes significantly to the school's worship, the Catholic life of the school and the overall curriculum. Pupils are engaged through the choir, brass bands, playing the recorder and various other instruments. All the pupils love singing and do so with great enthusiasm. The learning environment of Our Lady and St Philip Neri reflects the importance all staff place on celebrating pupils' work and promoting their self esteem. Displays in classrooms and public areas are of a high standard and reflect Gospel values and the school's Catholic distinctiveness. A very good range of clubs supplements all that is learnt in school and encourages the development of pupils' talents and their independence. There is an adequate supply of resources to support the curriculum, including a good selection of Bibles and resources for the teaching of other faiths. The school needs to keep these under review and add to them as funds allow.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The headteacher and co-ordinator for religious education are both strongly committed to promoting the faith development of pupils and to maintaining and raising standards. Together they ensure that the subject has a very high profile within the school. They are fully supported by a knowledgeable governing body and the two parish priests, both of whom are governors and one the link governor. The key actions in the School Development Plan reflect the school's priorities for its development as a Catholic community and to raising standards in religious education. The co-ordinator is experienced, knowledgeable and fully committed to her role. She is a dedicated leader and a model of good practice and is fully supported by the headteacher. Strong support is given to staff in the planning and delivery of the subject, both

informally and through staff meetings. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator is now well developed and includes scrutiny of pupils' books and observation of lessons. Supportive but rigorous feedback is given to staff, which has a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator meets regularly with the link governor who is very knowledgeable on the religious education curriculum. He reports back to the governing body and ensures they are kept well informed. There is a clear policy for the subject, which is kept under regular review. The co-ordinator meets with other co-ordinators for mutual support and now needs to ensure she attends the Diocesan meetings for coordinators when possible.