



# **Diocese of Westminster**

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## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St. Mary's Catholic Primary School**

Duke Road, Chiswick

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DCSF Number: 102529

URN Number: 376731

Headteacher: Ms Theresa McManus

Chair of Governors: Mrs Jessica Uyttenhove

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 23 November 2011  
Date of previous inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007

Reporting Inspector: Mrs. Tina Cleugh

## **Description of School**

St. Mary's is a one form entry over-subscribed and sought after primary school, with a Nursery. It is situated in the suburban area of Chiswick, West London. There are 234 children on roll, who are all Catholic. There are two children with statements of Special Educational Needs, and fourteen children on the Special Educational Needs register. The school serves the parish of Our Lady of Grace and St. Edward in Chiswick, with some pupils from the parish of St. Joseph's and St. Dunstons. The proportion of pupils from minority groups is above national averages although White British and White Irish pupils are the largest group. There is a very low and well below average rate of families claiming free school meals. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is also below average.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

St. Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school, which is effectively led and managed by the Headteacher, whose committed Catholic leadership is a key role model. This combined with the pro-active support from her management team and the governing body, effectively support this excellent school. The aspects explored from the teaching and learning, the extended school partnerships, the significant parish links, their accurate self evaluation combined with the confidence of the pupils and their ownership and pride in their school, reflect the overall excellent provision for all. The impact of this dedication was evident during the inspection, which reflects on the school's philosophy and practice. Standards in religious education are above national averages by the end of the key stage two and high in relation to pupil capability. Its ethos and mission is lived out daily, the warmth, welcoming atmosphere permeates all aspects of the school and is lived out by the community. The range of governors, parents, staff, pupils and the Parish Priest, who met with the Inspector, affirmed how the school is significant and firmly based on gospel values.

**Grade 1**

## **Improvement since the last inspection**

The key issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed; the assessment process is now defined and in line with Diocesan recommendations. The co-ordinator is tracking attainments across the school, including moderation within diocesan networks. The school ensures all teachers have previous data handed on to ensure continuity and progression in religious education. The scrutiny of the work in the books during the inspection provided evidence that marking is effectively informing future learning and development opportunities and needs, whilst encouraging peer marking and self assessment in the upper key stage two age groups.

**Grade 1**

## **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

This school has excellent capacity to continue to improve and develop. The Leadership and Management Team is clearly focussed and pro-actively supporting the very experienced Headteacher and the Governing Body with ongoing and future plans. They are key role models for new and inexperienced staff and the wide range of volunteers and parishioner supporting the school, particularly with its prayer life and celebration throughout the liturgical cycle. The Governing Body is well led by the experienced Chair of Governors, who is a key member of the local parish and community. The two governors explained to the inspector how "Catholicism links everything in our school, our Governing Body meetings are centred on prayer and our incredible triple partnership is embedded and part of our daily life". They were most proud to outline the triple partnership of the school "as a community, sharing the vision across the school, parish and the parents". The Parish Priest is a member of the Governing Body, where they work closely with the Headteacher and her teams and are active participants in the life of the school, including liturgical and seasonal celebrations. The Chaplain is most actively involved and supports the liturgical and religious education programmes, including parental and non-Catholic Staff support programmes throughout the year. The effective self-evaluation process is robust, identifying the next stages in improvement and development, thus enabling this successful school to move further forward with confidence.

**Grade 1**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- The school has identified the need to guide all teachers to effectively differentiate tasks set in religious education, as appropriate and relevant to meet the needs of varying abilities
- The school has begun to explore the next stage in tracking rates of progress in Religious Education against the attainments in Religious Education, through an electronic system, as for other core subject areas

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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The Headteacher and her Senior Leadership Team take the lead in ensuring effective and consistent systems, prayer cycles and processes are in place. They evaluate the School Improvement agenda regularly, through their strong commitment to the mission of the Church and its role providing clear direction for the Catholic life of the school. This was evident during the inspection, through the high quality range of portfolios, displays in all public areas, which reflected child-centred participation from the youngest to the oldest pupils, folders, tracking and levelling across all classes. This high quality range of evidence demonstrates how the pupils flourish to aspire to their full potential. Their self-evaluation processes were scrutinised during the inspection with evidence of how the pupils are supported and challenged to improve their learning in Religious Education, through the identified targets. The school has recognised its need to address this further and is committed to extending learning opportunities across all levels of ability. The inclusion of all learners, is both promoted and celebrated, with the vulnerable members of the community acknowledged as unique in the image and likeness of God, as evident through the rich extended school provision. The experienced co-ordinator fully

embraces the excellent strategies implemented by the Headteacher, and her management team. The Headteacher ensures the school's high expectations, particularly their excellent partnerships, their commitment to providing effective value-added attainment in line with expectations in English, is highly focussed, purposeful and sustained. This reflects the high morale evident across all phases and members of the community. The Governing Body is kept fully informed through the termly Headteacher reports, and those presented by the Co-ordinator and the Management Team.

## **Grade 1**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

This excellent school has a rich Catholic prayer life, "woven into the fabric of the daily life of the school", as outlined by some of the parents, endorsed by the parish priest, who met with the inspector. The school celebrates a very rich triple partnership between home, school and parish. The members of the Governing Body were proud to outline, during the inspection, "It's incredible how the triple partnership is embedded and part of our daily life, where our pupils are proud of their faith". They outlined how the rosary service in school is led by a parent, how the First Communicants are then altar servers, and proud to walk in the Corpus Christi procession, followed by a simplified Benediction. They were most proud about the involvement of the children in the regular class masses and masses in Church. The School has "Religious Education Prefects" who assist with collective worship. Their description of the "village atmosphere" in their community embraces the "school as a family." The outstanding collective worship across the phases was evident during the inspection. The children were active participants, demonstrating a strong sense of wonder, awe and reverence, from Foundation Stage practising their Sign of the Cross and Morning Prayer, to the older children leading the assembly prayers, which reflects the Catholicity of this community. The Headteacher with her Management Team, are excellent role models, ensuring a rich range of prayer opportunities both formal and informal. The quality of the religious displays around the school, in the classrooms, including a variety of child-centred prayers, especially remembering the Holy Souls, during November, is worthy of note. The recent visit of Bishop Alan Hopes was a day of great pride, joy and celebration for the school, when he concelebrated Mass with the two Priests from the Parish, blessed the new Bibles for all the children and spent the day meeting and greeting children, parents, governors and staff. The children have been introduced to the revised Mass settings, evident in their books and on display, with significant scriptural links to the Eucharist. The "Catholic ethos and Mission Statement has Catholicism as its whole", as described by the Chair of Governors, where "Catholicism links everything" within their community.

## **Grade 1**

### **How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?**

This internationally recognised school has a wealth of community links, partnerships and active roles in their local, national and global community. Their links with Ghana, provides opportunities for the children to explore a contrasting culture, within their global Catholic family.. The PSHCE programme, enhances and endorses the range of activities which links the school community across a range of cultures locally. The link with Acton High School enables its pupils from other faith traditions, including Islam and Hinduism, to visit regularly, leading sessions to inform the pupils about their faith, culture and religious celebrations. One of the school's music teachers supports the school's work on exploring Judaism, and the children have opportunities to visit a variety of places of worship, including the Synagogue, Mosque and

Temple. The school has recently developed good links with its neighbouring school, fostering links and sharing good practice with each other, encouraging the pupils to respect their neighbours. Circle Time is a regular feature in the weekly timetable, with effective relevant links to the 'Here I Am' topics, embracing the social, moral and personal development of the children. All classes have their "worry boxes" in prominent view. Behaviour is exemplary in and around the school, in class, where the children are most proud of their role as buddies, prefects, young leaders in training which is a new initiative, and members of the School Council. The children are confident, articulate and proud of their school. The older children look after the younger ones, ensuring the "Friendship Stop" is monitored regularly. They acknowledge they feel safe in school and are confident to act on issues that are unacceptable. They were delighted to boast the high quality range of extra-curricular programmes, their success in sports, and their participation in choir activities which support the parish and the elderly in the community throughout the year. They generously raise funds for those less well off than themselves, the marginalised for example, their work on behalf of "The Upper Room", supporting the homeless, their work to support their partnership school in Ghana. They regularly support CAFOD, the Catholic Children's Society the Good Shepherd Fund, the NSPCC and other charities as appropriate.

**Grade 1**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

Pupils start Nursery with varied attainment on entry. Most pupils are working within expected levels, based on assessments. Children achieve at national averages by the end of Foundation Stage. By the end of Key Stage One, there is evidence that the pupils are reaching above national averages. By the end of Key Stage Two there is significant evidence of attainment at above national average in Religious Education. This is applicable also to their levels of attainment in English overall. The school has utilised its tracking system to identify those gaps in attainment, with a focus on improvement through realistic yet challenging targets. During the inspection the lessons observed, the scrutiny of the work in the books, in folders and in portfolios, demonstrated a clear improvement, since the last inspection. Learners are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding consistently across the year groups. The evidence of their growing religious literacy across the key stages, especially in the Foundation Stage, Upper Key Stage Two, particularly with value added attainment. The work and teaching observed during the inspection on the "Signs and Symbols" topic, provided evidence of how progression is built into the planning across the phases. Marking is linked to the Learning Objective, with excellent examples in upper key stage two of peer marking and self-assessment techniques. The school has identified its need to focus on further improving the quality and consistency of the marking, with planned differentiated tasks, to inform future learning across the year groups, at age appropriate levels. The standards are good overall and outstanding at the end of Key Stage Two.

**Grade 2**

## **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

During the inspection the lessons observed ranged from Satisfactory to Outstanding. The evidence from the "Outstanding" lessons demonstrated differentiated questioning with teaching techniques and methods, which were clearly planned and scaffolded, in both Foundation Stage and Upper Key Stage Two. The pupils were fully engaged, motivated and enjoyed linking the Symbols of Baptism to the photographs from their recent visit to Church, including baptising the "baby". They observed a baptism, and the lesson where the link between Baptism and Confirmation was explored and identified, was well pitched and suitably challenging for all learners. This demonstrated the growing confidence of these older pupils. Their religious literacy was evident in their knowledge and understanding of the Signs and Symbols used in the Sacraments of Initiation. The needs of those pupils with Special Educational Needs were addressed through clearly differentiated tasks, supported by effective deployment of teaching assistants and the teacher ensuring these pupils were fully engaged in all aspects of the lessons. The pupils were also given ample time to explore their perceptions of the links in the signs and symbols, to think spiritually, and theologically. This included the use of "Talking Partners," which was brisk, as the teacher empowered the pupils to share their responses, with effective praise and rewards. The pupils informed the inspector that they enjoyed their Religious Education lessons, explaining "they learn lots, the older children help and everyone gets on well with each other". The scrutiny of work in the books and in their folders showed how they were marked and up to date, with excellent examples in upper key stage two, including peer marking and self-assessment opportunities. The comments were relevant to the lesson objectives and in general challenging pupils to move on to the next stage in learning. The exemplary behaviour of the pupils in lessons, in and around the school was orderly, calm, providing evidence of how these pupils are clearly comfortable in their school environment and proud of their achievements.

**Grade 2**

## **Quality of the Curriculum**

The School fully meets the 10% requirement as laid down by the Bishop's Conference. The 'Here I Am' programme is supported by a rich range of activities, including effective and enrichment Creativity activities in the curriculum, through skills based themes. These include, Diocesan initiatives, such as the Revised Mass Settings, where the children are exploring the responses, linked to the traditional scripture passages. The range of visitors from "Other Faith" communities, provide opportunities for exploration of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. These events including visits to places of worship providing opportunities for the children to learn about other cultures, faith traditions and respect for their neighbours. Their global connections include activities with a school in Ghana, where the children are actively reaching out to support them, have regular communication with them and share each others culture, celebrations and special events. The high quality displays in and around the public areas of the school provide excellent evidence of how the children in different year groups, have learnt from special events, links with scripture and demonstrated their growing knowledge and understanding. The Headteacher's weekly assembly includes links from the Sunday Liturgy and Liturgical Cycle which enhances the 'Here I Am' topics. The school plans its PSHCE programme in line with the relevant and appropriate topics from 'Here I Am', including the Diocesan Sex and Relationships programme, the Life Bus annual week programme covering Drugs Awareness and other appropriate cross-curricular links. ICT is effectively utilised as witnessed during the inspection; in the upper key stage two lesson the children created power point presentations on the important of the signs and symbols in the Sacrament of Confirmation, whilst in the Foundation

Stage an effective assessment strategy was how photographic evidence of how they explored and learnt about the signs and symbols in baptism was impressive.

**Grade 1**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The Co-ordinator attends all Diocesan training and network meetings. The school liaises regularly with the diocese across a range of issues, including the Advisor annual visits, building developments, termly CPD for staff and members of the Governing Body, and attendance at Conferences. The Co-ordinator disseminates, through planned in-service, the Diocesan initiatives and developments, including tracking and assessment of attainments in Religious Education. The Co-ordinator has established a system of peer observations with colleagues to empower them to recognise the teaching and learning skills, strategies, techniques and qualities required, particularly how children progress through the attainments in effective Religious Education. The termly schedule includes scrutiny of the work in the books, portfolios and displays in class and public areas of the school, with presentations to the Governing Body. She identifies the Staff CPD needs, in liaison with the Senior Management Team. She supports and guides newly qualified teachers, modelling teaching and learning strategies, guiding planning and assessment. Her ready availability and "open door" policy is reflected in the excellent provision in the school. During the inspection the meeting with the Parish Priest affirmed the Co-ordinators dedication to this important post. The school has appointed a music teacher, who ensures the schedule of hymn practices coincides with those in the parish, embracing this triple partnership on a weekly basis. The Co-ordinator leads non-Eucharistic services with the younger children, whilst organising the planning for the corresponding church services for the older children both in school and in the parish. These excellent links are the hallmark of this outstanding school through the way it nurtures, respects and values its immediate, local and global community.

**Grade 1**