



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 101652

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School
Harting Road
Mottingham, London
SE9 4JR

Inspection date: 8 March 2013

Chair of Governors: Mrs Mary Nash
Headteacher: Mrs Deirdre Wright
Inspectors: Mrs Ann Oddy
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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Vincent's Primary School is a one-form entry voluntary aided primary school. It is situated in the Greenwich Deanery in the Archdiocese of Southwark, serving the parishes of Our Lady Help of Christians Mottingham, St Patrick's Chislehurst West and St Mary's Chislehurst. It is maintained by Bromley local authority but borders Lewisham, Bexley and Greenwich. The school is oversubscribed; the majority of its pupils come from Our Lady Help of Christians, the principal parish which the school serves. A small number are from Good Shepherd, Downham. 92% of pupils are baptised Catholics. 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 224. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Although pupil mobility for the school as a whole is close to the national average, it is high in Key Stage 2. The percentage of pupils receiving Free School Meals is 16.1%, which is below the national average; however the school deprivation indicator score is 0.36 (compared to a national average of 0.24) which indicates that some eligible families may not be claiming this entitlement.

The school has a high percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups and a steadily increasing number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

St Vincent's is an outstanding Catholic school. It provides an exciting and well resourced learning environment in which all are supported, encouraged and challenged to achieve their best. The headteacher leads a highly effective staff team committed to doing their best for the pupils in their care. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the school and the high quality Catholic education it provides. One commented "The education is distinctively Catholic, relevant to the children's minds at this stage and interlinked with every aspect of knowledge".

Pupils enjoy school and achieve well, attaining results above national and local averages. They are exceptionally well-behaved, polite and friendly, with a great sense of pride in their school. The school environment reflects its Catholic identity in the many attractive displays and artefacts relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school has good links with its local parish and the parish priest visits the school regularly to celebrate Mass. Governors are fully committed to their role of support and challenge and to promoting the school as a Catholic community. All areas for development recommended by the last inspection have been fully addressed.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Develop the current good practice in lesson observations in Religious Education to include a chosen focus on key areas such as the assessment opportunities within the lesson, plenaries and the use of reflection.
- Further develop the current good practice in marking in Religious Education by including reflective marking, next steps and target setting as consistent practice across the school.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

GRADE 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy head are excellent role models who inspire and enthuse the staff, creating a vibrant learning community centred around the mission of the school. A comprehensive system of monitoring and assessment feeds into school self-evaluation, which accurately identifies areas for development. Governors are actively involved in the Catholic life of the school. Their monitoring role includes lessons and assemblies as well as contributing to school self-evaluation and review of the Mission Statement. Religious Education is included in Governing Body discussions on a regular basis. Governors are well informed and have good knowledge of the curriculum and the school's performance. Staff are encouraged to develop their roles and responsibilities and this, together with an effective induction programme for new staff, has built a strong and cohesive staff team fully committed to relentless school improvement.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Pupils are provided with a variety of opportunities for personal and collective worship, including Masses, liturgies, assemblies and personal prayer. Pupils' own prayers were included in Religious Education lessons and the assembly observed and books of pupils' prayers and prayer intentions were a feature of prayer focus areas in classrooms.

Pupils spoke confidently and unselfconsciously about "Talking to God" and of the importance of prayer in their lives. They are familiar with the formal prayers of the Church and are able to express themselves in spontaneous, informal prayers. They know about the patron saint of their school and his importance in the Catholic life of the school.

The assembly observed focused on forgiveness and used the parable of the Prodigal Son to illustrate this. Pupils were respectful and attentive and enjoyed enacting the story and reading their own prayers. Classroom prayer focus areas are well resourced and attractive. They are linked to the topic currently studied in Religious Education and to the liturgical year and include pupils' work and prayers.

To enhance pupils' understanding of the readings at Mass on Sunday, the school sends families the "Wednesday Word" so that parents and children can discuss and reflect on the readings together.

Prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school is regularly monitored and evaluated as part of the school's self-evaluation.

Community cohesion

GRADE 1

St Vincent's is an inclusive school community in which everyone is welcome and everyone is valued. All pupils are offered appropriate support and challenge to enable them to achieve their best; as a result, the school has no significant underperforming groups and many pupils achieve well above expectations. Staff and pupils show respect and support for each other; this is recognised and appreciated by parents. One wrote "From a Catholic perspective the school fosters a mood of caring among the children, to each other, to the younger children and to the children who need extra help and attention. The moral and spiritual guidance from staff to children is very good and the school feels like one big Catholic family". The school's Family Worker provides valuable support and advice to families and provides effective liaison between school and home as appropriate.

Pupils are familiar with the Mission Statement and can relate this to their life in school. They are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves through considering

global issues and fundraising for a variety of good causes. The study of other faiths deepens their understanding of communities with different cultures and beliefs.

There are close links with the local parish. The school recognises that some of its pupils come from other parishes and supports them wherever possible e.g. by attending the First Holy Communion celebrations at all the parishes. The school is very much part of the wider Diocesan family of Catholic schools, attending Diocesan courses and conferences and working with other Catholic schools in the area. The headteacher provides outreach work to the wider community of schools locally in her roles as a National Leader in Education and a Local Leader in Education.

Religious Education

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are outstanding. Pupils achieve exceptionally well, with the great majority meeting and often exceeding expected levels. Significant numbers of pupils achieve the higher levels. The school's very effective systems of assessment and pupil tracking monitor pupils' progress throughout the school. Regular levelled assessments, with both in-house and external moderation, ensure that judgements are accurate. Interventions and support are put in place as appropriate and all groups of pupils make very good progress.

Pupils' books are of a high standard and comparable with their standards in Literacy. Books are regularly and thoroughly marked and marking is affirmative and encouraging. In some year groups marking indicates a reflective dialogue between teacher and pupil but does not suggest to pupils the next steps they need to take to enhance their learning; the school may wish to consider developing its marking policy to include this, together with appropriate target setting.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are of an exceptionally high standard. Four lessons were observed, all were graded outstanding. In all lessons observed, pace was excellent and pupil progress was evident. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, who respond very positively. Lessons are well structured and cater for the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately and sensitively; high ability pupils receive an impressive degree of challenge. Lessons are well planned to include opportunities for prayer and reflection to enhance the topics being studied. Teachers make skilful use of probing questions to draw out discussion and teaching assistants are highly effectively employed across the classroom. Teaching assistants are clearly skilled in judging appropriate levels of support and use questions and prompts effectively to enable pupils to achieve their learning objectives.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their religious literacy, with discussions of key concepts and vocabulary. Year 6 pupils use Bibles confidently as part of their Religious Education lessons. Lessons relate Religious Education to pupils' own lives and the world around them. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Regular Religious Education newsletters and the Wednesday Word provide information regarding the curriculum and activities and reflections for parents to follow with their children.

The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 1

The school follows the Religious Education programme "The Way, the Truth and the Life". All pupils receive 10% of curriculum time for Religious Education. Religious Education is well resourced, with attractive and appropriate books and artefacts and this includes resources for learning about other faiths. The Religious Education curriculum is reflected in the many displays around the school and in classrooms and is clearly central to school life. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and appreciate its importance to themselves and as part of their studies. They find Religious Education interesting and are able to talk about the impact it has on their lives. They enjoy the links with drama and music and appreciate how these are used to enrich the curriculum. Curriculum provision is exceptionally well planned and delivered and results in excellent pupil outcomes.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

GRADE 1

The Religious Education coordinator is relatively new to the post, but is coordinating the subject exceptionally well. She supports and encourages staff, providing resources and expertise and keeping them up to date with new developments in the curriculum. Her

subject leader's portfolio is well organised and presents an informative picture of Religious Education in the school. She is clearly enthusiastic and committed and appreciative of the valuable support given her by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Comprehensive monitoring and assessment contribute to her excellent overview of the subject area and accurately informed the Section 48 School Self Evaluation Form. The Religious Education coordinator attends Diocesan training and meetings with Religious Education coordinators from other Catholic schools. She carries out book and planning scrutinies, lesson observations and is responsible for maintaining records of the assessment and levelling of pupils' work. The school may wish to consider developing its current good practice in lesson observations by identifying key areas in lessons as a focus for observations as a means to securing further school improvement.