

**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 118775

St William of Perth Catholic Primary School
Canon Close
Rochester
Kent
ME1 3EN

Chair of Governors	Mr Rob Twist
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Keywood
Inspectors	Mrs B Dowswell
	Mrs C Mayhew

Inspection dates 25 January 2011

**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

St William of Perth is a voluntary aided school, which is situated in the Chatham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Medway Local Authority. The principal parish, which the school serves, is St John Fisher, Rochester. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 66%. 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 198. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 20% of the pupils receive extra support in class. While the majority of pupils are from a White British background, 25% come from a wide variety of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

Saint William of Perth is a good and improving Catholic school, with some strong features that identify it as a living Catholic community based on the Gospel values of love, respect and forgiveness. The school's strengths lie in the quality of relationships throughout the school, the pastoral care of pupils and their families and its outstanding provision for prayer and worship. The school has seen many changes of teaching staff and governors within the last two years. A new senior management team has been established and the relatively new headteacher is building a strong cohesive team who, under her strong and sensitive leadership are united in their commitment to developing the Catholic life of the school and to raising standards in religious education. Links with parents who are very supportive of the school are very good and they are very appreciative of the staff and the school. One parent wrote, 'I am delighted with the spiritual, moral and cultural education of my daughter. I cannot fault it in any way; she has a strong sense of spirituality for a seven year old'. Pupils are warm, welcoming, friendly and very well behaved. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor and more links between the school and parish are developing. Pupils' progress in religious education is good in the early stages but the school recognises that as pupils move through the school, progress is inconsistent and not all pupils achieve as well as they could. Teaching has improved and continues to do so but there are some inconsistencies in teaching and in provision for the more able pupils. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous report and recognises the need to further develop assessment procedures and to ensure that the more able are suitably challenged. There are clear procedures for self evaluation and the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. It is therefore well placed to build on its strengths and to make further improvement.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Develop a range of tasks to challenge and extend the more able pupils, including tasks which give pupils the opportunity for independent learning and research.

Continue to embed the assessment procedures in order for them to have a greater impact on attainment.

Ensure the quality and presentation of work in pupils' books is consistently good in all classes.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 2

The Headteacher and Deputy Head teacher, who share the role of subject leader for religious education, work closely together and form a strong team. They are fully committed to ensuring that the Catholic life of the school and religious education are given a very high profile. The Headteacher has a very clear vision of Catholic education and the mission of the school, which she has successfully shared with all members of the school community. She provides strong and effective leadership in a calm and sensitive way. Senior staff and governors have a strong determination to provide all pupils with an excellent education within a strong Catholic ethos. The Catholic identity of the school is clearly evident through the many displays such as those on Bible stories and one on the Bible linked to the Masses prepared by various classes. The Mission Statement, which was reviewed by the whole staff in autumn 2010, drives the work of the school. Pupils were invited to write their own statement and examples of these were seen around the school. The parish priest who visits the school regularly is supportive and well known by pupils, staff and parents. Communication with parents is very good, both informally and formally and parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school, the staff and the education and care their children receive. The words of one parent echo those of many others, 'the school provides excellent pastoral care. The children respect each other and their behaviour reflects the caring attitude of the staff. We are always informed of any religious 'events' held both at the school and at St John Fisher church.' Governors, some of whom are newly appointed, effectively fulfil their role in relation to the school's ethos, mission and Catholic life. They join the school for Mass, liturgies and some assemblies. Each governor is now assigned to a specific class; this will enable them to become more aware of the education the pupils receive.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

Prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist are central to the life of the school. A very good programme for collective worship, following the liturgical year, is linked effectively to the 'Here I Am' religious education programme. Pupils are encouraged to become personally involved and care is being taken to ensure that the different ages, abilities and interests of the pupils are addressed through a variety of activities, such as drama, song, mime and liturgical dance. Parents and friends and sometimes parishioners are invited to Masses, liturgies and some assemblies. They attend in good numbers and this further strengthens the home, school and parish partnership. Prayer is at the heart of school life and the school is to be commended for the way it links this with the pupil's lives at home and with their parents. All parents receive a prayer booklet to enable them to help their children learn the prayers which are used in school and to pray with them at home. In addition a home class prayer book is being developed in each class. Each child will be able to take this book home and they are encouraged to compose a prayer with their

parents. During the months of May and October, parents, children and staff are able to pray parts of the rosary before the start of the school day. From their early years at the school, pupils are taught the traditional prayers of the Church and are encouraged to compose their own prayers. Thoughtful and meaningful prayers were seen in pupil books, displays and class prayer books. The school makes every effort to help pupils to develop their own personal prayer life. For example in Lent and Advent each pupil was given their own small activity/ prayer book by the school. All classes have a focal area for prayer and these were generally of a high quality and used by the class. Prayer and reflection are an integral part of all religious education lessons. The whole school attends Mass in the parish church at various times during the year. The Mass celebrated on the day of the inspection was prepared by Years 3 and 6. Many pupils participated by taking part in reading, serving, the offertory procession and a liturgical dance. The Hail Mary was said in a variety of languages and all pupils sang well and enthusiastically. Pupils' behaviour was very good and they were respectful throughout the Mass. The school has a variety of other liturgical celebrations and services throughout the year, including an Advent wreath service, Stations of the Cross, Passion play and Reconciliation. Parents and parishioners are welcomed to many of these services, thus strengthening the home/school partnership. The participation of pupils in these liturgies helps to develop their understanding of being part of a worshipping Catholic community. The richness of provision makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Community Cohesion

Grade 2

St William of Perth extends a warm welcome to all its pupils and their families and all who visit the school. All staff are thoroughly committed to the school aims, which include 'our respect for human life and the dignity of the individual.' All pupils including those with additional needs and of different cultures and faiths are well integrated into this happy school community. One parent wrote, 'The school is a very welcoming community, where all staff care and keep children safe. Both my children feel valued and happy in their school environment.' Relationships throughout the school are very good and are clearly built on mutual respect. Pupils' behaviour is very good, they are very enthusiastic about their school and keen to sing the praises of their school and the adults who teach and care for them. 'Jack our school caretaker is really nice, he smiles all the time and says hi to us', 'Our school has nice people, nice teachers and we all get on' and 'Our teachers are fair and fun and treat everyone equally', are just a few of the many comments from pupils during the inspection. An active school council, whose members take their responsibilities seriously, makes a significant contribution to the life of the school. The school council members represent their class members very well and ensure their views are discussed and heard. They have been instrumental in changes to play times, playground markings and the provision of more waste bins. Pupils are given opportunities to support each other, with older pupils actively supporting younger pupils at lunch times and during rainy break times. They also welcome visitors to the school and talk with parents

and grandparents at 'tea parties' in the school. Parents are involved through an active association and organise both social and fund raising events. Links with the parish are developing and the school is eager to develop these further. The school supports the monthly family Mass in the parish and pupils are fully involved in this. The school hall is used by the parish community for various events, such as fairs, bazaars and coffee mornings. The school has developed good links with its immediate neighbours around the school and they are invited to school events and performances. There are also good supportive links with local secondary schools, which enhance the educational provision for pupils. An example of this is the school's use of a secondary school's swimming pool. Pupils are very keen to show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and support a wide range of charities through a variety of fund raising activities. These include a children's hospice, Cabrini, children in need and CAFOD. The School Council organised an event where large maps of Egypt and Pakistan were covered with coins and the money raised was given to the Pakistan flood appeal and a school for refugees in Egypt. The school caretaker has visited the refugee school and it is hoped that links between the two schools will be developed. The school is also looking at ways to establish links with a school in another school in the UK. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other world faiths is being further enhanced by visits to a synagogue and a Hindu temple.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 3

On entry to the school, pupils' abilities and skills are generally those expected of their age but their knowledge and experience of faith and Church varies. Clear routines help pupils in the Reception class to settle well into school life so they are confident and happy to learn. A firm foundation for future learning in religious education is established. These young pupils are beginning to know some stories from Scripture and could talk about the people in the story of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple. They were able to reflect quietly and to help compose a simple litany. There is clear evidence of good progress across Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils in Year 2 reach standards expected of their age and a good number achieve more. Some pupils in Year 2 were able to think quite deeply about what God is teaching them through the event of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple. Across Key Stage 2, progress is less consistent but there is evidence that this is improving. At the end of the previous Year 6, whilst many pupils achieved the standard expected of their age, none achieved the higher level. The school now has strategies in place to raise the standards of all pupils, including higher expectations by teachers, good assessment procedures and targeting of pupils. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' religious vocabulary and there was clear evidence of these in displays, pupils' books and during lessons. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have very positive attitudes to their religious education lessons. The quality and presentation of pupils' work in their books is variable throughout the school and does not always show progress between year groups.

Some teachers need to raise their expectations as to what is acceptable work. The school could consider ways to make pupils' books special in some way. Pupils' work is recorded in a good variety of ways, including narrative writing, play scripts, litanies, leaflets and prayers and digital photography; however there is little evidence of independent and investigative work by pupils.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 3

Since the appointment of the headteacher in January 2010, there has been a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils. During the inspection, the teaching observed was never less than satisfactory and much of it was good. All lessons have clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils and often referred to during lessons and plenary sessions. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which together with good behaviour management strategies result in a calm and purposeful working atmosphere. Support and training have enabled staff to become more confident in planning differentiated tasks to meet the needs of their pupils and challenge the more able. In a Year 4 class children were able to order references from different books of the Bible and some pupils went on to link passages from scripture with the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Marriage. The pupils were able to use Scripture references confidently. There were good links with literacy in all lessons. For example in a Year 6 class some pupils were asked to write a book review on the Bible and others to prepare both sides of an argument, entitled, "What role and purpose does the Bible have for us today?". Teaching assistants give good, focussed support, which enables pupils with additional needs to participate in lessons and make progress. Pupils' work is marked carefully with affirming comments. There was some evidence of developmental marking to help pupils think more deeply and know what they need to do to improve. In a few classes pupils are given time to respond to their teachers marking but this is inconsistent through the school and needs to be extended. The school has worked hard since the last inspection on the assessment of pupils' work and has made good progress. Teachers have undertaken shared moderation exercises and the use of a baseline assessment for religious education is being trialled in the Reception class. Pupils' work is assessed according to Diocesan guidelines and the tracking of individual pupil progress is being introduced. When fully embedded in practice, the assessment procedures should begin to have an impact on raising standards in religious education.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 2

Religious education is considered fundamental to the expression and delivery of the school ethos and consequently it permeates the whole school day. In addition the school dedicates 10% of teaching time to lessons in religious education. The curriculum, which is based on the 'Here I Am' religious education programme builds on the foundation of home and relates well to pupils' own lives and experiences. One parent wrote, 'The school is a wonderful citadel of learning. It does not only develop the children's academic life but other aspects, especially the spiritual life'. At the present time the school is developing links between the SEAL (social and emotional education)

materials and 'Here I Am' religious education programme. The quality of planning tasks, which meet the different ability needs of pupils continues to improve. Staff are supported in this through regular staff meetings to discuss and introduce new topics. They also have a 'planning guidance pack' to help them. In all lessons observed teachers built well on pupils' prior attainment and reinforced previous learning. Teaching assistants were well deployed and their role clearly defined. Their input is sensitively given and their skills and expertise support the learning programme. Parents are kept well informed of the religious education curriculum through regular newsletters. The school has a good range of resources including 'RE Provide', which supports the 'Here I Am' religious education programme, and many other aspects of the religious education curriculum. There is a range of resources for the teaching of other faiths. A good range of lunch time and after school clubs supplements all that is learnt in school and helps pupils to develop their skills and talents.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership and management of religious education is good overall and improving rapidly. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who share responsibility for the subject, are both strongly committed to raising standards. Key areas for development have been incorporated into a detailed and realistic action plan. The policy for religious education and collective worship is clear and supportive to staff. Non-catholic staff also have access to the booklet, 'A survival guide for those working in a Catholic school'. Staff are given very good support through focussed staff meetings and training days. The subject leaders have modelled good practice in teaching, which gives good support to less experienced teachers. The monitoring of religious education has developed well since the last inspection. The process is systematic and includes scrutiny of pupils' books, focal areas and observation of lessons. Teachers are given constructive feedback. Both subject leaders attend various Diocesan meetings and conferences and cluster groups within the Deanery. In addition to providing mutual support, this enables them to keep up to date with new initiatives, which are related back to staff. Governors are very conscientious and some have attended diocesan and local authority training. They are kept informed on religious education through school visits, newsletters and headteacher reports. They are aware of the need to establish effective structures to ensure they are kept informed and made aware of standards and attainment. The resources for religious education are well managed and organised.