



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

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

**URN 100825**

**St James the Great Catholic Primary School**

**Peckham Road**

**Peckham**

**London SE15 5LP**

**Inspection date: 09 November 2017**

**Co - Chairs of Governors: Ann Cutting /  
Jane McManus**

**Executive Headteacher: Janice Babb**

**Head of School: Denis O'Regan**

**Inspectors: Stephen Beck  
Jan Mann**

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331

**Interim Director of Education: Stephen Bryan**



### Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St James the Great Catholic Primary is situated in the Camberwell Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is voluntary aided and maintained by Southwark Local Authority. It serves the parish of St James the Great, Peckham Rye, but attracts pupils from further afield including those who are members of Ethnic Chaplaincies. 95% 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 3 to 11 years, which includes the Nursery. The number of pupils currently on roll is 222. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is well below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 30%, is above average. This does not include the significant number of families who have no recourse to public funds which is estimated at 10%. Around 30% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The largest group of children is of Black African heritage and there is a diverse ethnic mix in the school. 99% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is well above average.



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St James the Great is a good Catholic school because:

- Catholic Life at St James the Great is outstanding. Senior leaders, staff and governors have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, taking a lead role in activities that promote the school's ethos within school, parish and the wider community.
- The school's Executive Headteacher is dynamic and her enthusiasm is infectious. She has raised the aspirations of all. The Head of School is a highly effective role model, an inspiration for the whole school community and is firmly and deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Together, they have established a strong committed senior leadership team, who with the governing body, have developed a strong capacity to build on current achievements.
- The majority of teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice. A range of teaching styles, good questioning skills, clear explanations and well-paced lessons ensures that pupils are consistently interested in their learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confident learning.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is shared with parents and parishioners on a regular basis through liturgies and Collective Worship.
- The school's pupil liturgy group take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character in school and the wider community. The pupils talk confidently about their involvement in this group and how it helps them to grow spiritually

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Continue developments in line with the school's own self-evaluation by:
  - i. Using Diocesan guidance to move to developing assessment without levels in line with other subjects;
  - ii. Continue to develop differentiation in the teaching of Religious Education to meet the needs of all pupils and particularly the more able;
  - iii. Bring to fruition the plans to further develop the Catholic environment of the school.
- Ensure teachers consistently enable pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers against specified criteria for success.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

### 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

2

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

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

1

### Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2



## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

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

- St James the Great is a highly caring and fully inclusive Catholic school. The pupils are proud of their heritage and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. Differences are viewed as an opportunity for learning and celebration. All pupils are valued, supported and understand the importance of respecting others regardless of their ability, cultural or religious background.
- Pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school to a significant degree. The school's mission statement "Doing our best for God, for other people and for ourselves" gives pupils an understanding of what it means to be part of the Catholic community of St James the Great. Pupils in Key Stage 2 commented, "It helps us to do our best in whatever we do" and "It helps us to think of others." The impact of a solid understanding of the mission statement ensures that pupils are courteous and respectful of each other as a matter of course.
- The school's behaviour policy is underpinned by the concepts of reconciliation and forgiveness. Pupils benefit greatly from this; they use it as a guide on how to conduct themselves.
- Pupils participate willingly in events at school, community, parish and diocesan levels. This again enhances their Catholic identity and pupils feel proud. The new Early Years class celebrated their start at the school at a Sunday Mass in the parish, which saw a large attendance from the whole school community.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of belonging to the school and the contribution they make to the wider Peckham community, as exemplified by the work undertaken to utilise an area of disused land and a programme, in liaison with Peckham Citizens, to support the prevention of knife crime.
- The values and ethos of the school are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members throughout the school community. St James the Great is a calm oasis whereby everyone feels safe and valued.
- Pupils hold responsibilities such as school councillors, play supporters, liturgy leaders, peacemakers and duty leaders at lunchtime. As Ofsted reported "Pupils in these roles stand out as eloquent ambassadors."
- An unusually high number of parent questionnaire returns were received and were 100% positive. One parent wrote, "I am very happy with St James the Great School. They have activities the children participate in after school including school choir. The school informs parents when they have any service or special occasion with the children concerning the church. I am very well impressed with the teachers because



of the communications with families.” Another parent wrote, “The school is really working with us.” This approach is undoubtedly a real strength of the school. Another parent said, “They make the Catholic Faith real.”

### **The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding**

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is a high priority which is reflected in the mission statement and in the way the mission of the school is lived out by all in this faith community. There is a very tangible sense of family and community in all aspects of school life which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all stakeholders. Parents agreed that there is an “atmosphere of love” that makes the school a special place.
- The school is a prayerful community that provides a stimulating environment which reflects the school’s mission and its Catholic character.
- Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding as a result of the commitment of all stakeholders and through having clear policies and structures in place. Pastoral programmes working alongside Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) refer to Catholic teachings and principles. These programmes cater for the needs of all pupils with skilled staff playing an active part in their delivery to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- The Parish Priest regularly supports the Catholic Life of the school and the pastoral care of pupils and staff. His commitment to, and support of, the school is highly valued and appreciated.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding and the monitoring of this ensures it is well placed both to challenge and support.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding**

- Leaders and governors are dedicated to the Catholic Life of the school. This is evidenced by the rich curriculum on offer and the fundamental commitment to making the school a vibrant place to learn.
- The Executive Headteacher is dynamic and her enthusiasm is infectious and has served to raise the aspirations of all. The Head of School is a highly effective role model. He is an inspiration for the whole school community and is firmly and deeply committed to the Church’s mission in education and has formed a highly effective professional working partnership with the Executive Headteacher. Together they have established a strong committed senior leadership team, who with the Governing Body, have developed a strong capacity to build on current achievements.



- The school's self-evaluation document provides evidence of the schools' monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. This reflected an accurate diagnosis of the schools strengths and areas for development that inspectors were able to validate.
- Governors are able to critically evaluate what the school does, as well as relate first-hand, the impact that the pupils have on parish events where feedback is always of the highest calibre. The Religious Education link governor is an active member of the parish community and as such takes a very real interest in this core element of school life.
- The impact of this is that pupils are well supported by confident leaders who want the school to keep a fresh level of challenge. These leaders are able to self-reflect, keeping the Catholic Life within the school as a top priority. They are dedicated to making sure that the Catholic ethos of the school remains a key strength.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good**

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education and are keen to do well. They work well in lessons, applying themselves to the tasks and work at a reasonable pace. They seek to produce their best work and show interest and enthusiasm about their learning. A child commented, “I like RE because you learn what’s happening in the world.”
- Behaviour in lessons is very good with the majority of pupils concentrating and displaying positive attitudes to their learning.
- As pupils progress through the school they develop and apply a range of skills, including independence, imagination and the ability to interpret sources and symbols. They have opportunities to reflect and evaluate religious ideas and integrate them into their lives.
- Pupils’ attainment in Religious Education is good and for a number of pupils very good. They make strong progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Assessments undertaken to date and scrutiny of workbooks, provides evidence of pupils attaining a good level for their age and stage of development and a number of pupils exceed expectations.
- Outcomes for pupils with Additional or Special Educational Needs (SEN) are very strong and their support is highly effective.
- In line with Diocesan guidance, work is under way to develop assessment without levels.
- Pupils are increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Driver words are used routinely in some lessons, but could be developed further. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils work effectively in pairs and collaboratively in small groups. Progress and attainment would benefit from a school focus on pupils having more opportunities to tackle independent tasks, experience deeper questioning and the development of opportunities for pupil self-assessment in order to offer greater challenge, particularly in supporting the progress of more able pupils.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good**

- In a most classes the range of activities provided for the pupils is very effective in engaging and enthusing pupils. This excellent practice needs sharing to ensure all



pupils are enabled to benefit and further develop their independence and resilience.

- The majority of teaching is good with examples of outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. A range of teaching styles, good questioning skills, clear explanations and well-paced lessons ensure that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and most make good progress. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confident learning.
- An assessment system is in place and monitoring is securing improvement. Assessments are regular and systematic. Both internal and external moderation shows assessments are accurate. Feedback and marking are generally consistent and systems to allow pupils to respond are developing. The school recognises that pupils' skills in self-assessment need to be developed further.
- The integration of pupils with SEN, some quite severe, is outstanding. These pupils are well supported by teachers and support staff who are in turn supported by an experienced, passionate, knowledgeable and proactive SENCO.
- A very good Year 6 lesson on the topic of vocation saw the teacher expertly engage the pupils through a range of strategies including open ended questioning, good lesson pace, strong vocabulary development and excellent classroom management. This created a participatory learning environment. Pupils were well supported by the other adults in the class. They produced thoughtful written work through writing a letter to a younger pupil.
- In a Year 5 lesson on the Sacrament of Marriage the teacher made excellent use of scripture using the passage of 'The Capable Wife.' The willingness to explore gender in marriage in the context of Catholic teaching provided challenge and good debate. Pupils were able to articulate their ideas and respected those of others.
- A Year 3 lesson that focussed on the commitments made at Baptism and when they would be carried out generated some interesting thoughts for pupils to consider such as "What does the Holy Spirit do for us?" Pupils made good links between Baptism and Holy Communion. Good use was made of talk partners.
- A Year 2 lesson on Baptism saw pupils fully engaged as they developed a deeper understanding of how the Baptismal Candle represents Jesus. Pupils applied themselves to the tasks set and shared their work with others confidently. The lesson was enhanced by the pupils singing and signing.
- A Year 1 lesson on Baptism made good use of role play to support learning. The lesson contained dynamic teaching, the setting of high expectations, elements of self-assessment and strong vocabulary development, for example a knowledge of 'Christm.'
- In an Early Years lesson the teacher created a lovely working environment by commencing the lesson with a reverent calm opening reflection period. The lesson



built well on previous learning on the topic of Baptism. Learning was supported by teacher enthusiasm, confidence and a good pupil, teacher relationship. The lesson was well paced, made use of effective questioning, role play, picture sequencing and relevance to pupils own Baptism and relationship with their own Godparents.

- Parents appreciate the termly 'Come and See at Home' letter which they felt helped them support their child's Religious Education. A parent commented, "I strongly support the entire teaching staff for all their good work."

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding**

- The Head of School works closely with the Religious Education leader to jointly lead the subject. The subject leader gains experience and knowledge of her key role through attending the Diocesan Religious Education leader meetings and conferences.
- Leaders of the school place a high emphasis upon the quality of the school's Religious Education provision, in terms of both planning and delivery, ensuring all the needs of learners are met through active learning experiences. Staff are skilled, but remain committed to achieving yet higher standards in their teaching through continuing professional development.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is excellent. As a result, the Senior Leadership Team and Governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- A detailed action plan is in place to secure improvement; these initiatives are already having a positive impact on standards in the school. Staff are kept informed of priorities identified.
- The Religious Education curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. It makes a significant contribution to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils which enables them to become reflective learners.
- The Religious Education scheme 'Come and See' has been implemented effectively in all year groups and the school works effectively with a range of partners to increase the range and quality of opportunities for pupils.
- Governors make regular visits to the school. They are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities and are extremely supportive in their approach. As the school is moving forward they should now look to becoming even more strategic than managerial.



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding**

- St James the Great is a prayerful and spiritual school where prayer and worship underpin the school community. Pupils take an active part in assemblies, Masses and liturgies. They respond well and participate reverently in the school's Collective Worship. They appreciate the importance of coming together as a worshipping community and the need to include all, whilst understanding and respecting the beliefs of others.
- The school's active liturgy group take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character in the school and wider community. The pupils talk confidently about their involvement in this group and how it helps them to grow spiritually. They articulated their membership of the group saying, "If we serve God we serve others."
- Pupil behaviour is exemplary and pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in all aspects of worship; they are able to answer questions confidently and demonstrate good religious vocabulary.
- Prayer is woven into the fabric of the school day. Shared opportunities for prayer are preserved and highly valued. An inclusive ethos allows for all children to participate in worship. Prayer is alive and valued in challenging situations, by pupils, staff and families. Traditional prayers are known. Opportunities for private, personal reflection were observed
- During the Collective Worship observed by the inspection team, pupils led a Key Stage 2 (KS2) Gospel assembly. This was based on the Sunday Gospel and provided an excellent and challenging learning experience which held the attention of all present. A similar Key Stage 1 (KS1) assembly attended was teacher led and less effective. The school should consider having the KS2 pupils lead Gospel assemblies for KS1.

### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is shared with parents and parishioners on a regular basis through liturgies and Masses, prayer times and assemblies.
- The prayer life of the school is an important and central aspect of community life for staff and pupils. The school sends out the 'Wednesday Word' to encourage family prayer and discussion around scripture. Parents indicated they welcomed this.



- Staff are mindful of securing good quality Collective Worship reflecting the Church's liturgical heritage, rites and seasons when developing quality experiences for all pupils. Staff plan carefully for the Liturgical formation of their pupils. Age appropriate planning that encompasses religious beliefs and backgrounds, generally shows progression as pupils journey through the school.
- Pupils have begun to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship for their classes, with some leading Gospel assemblies. This could now be extended to the wider school and a common approach to planning and leading Collective Worship adopted.
- All classes had interesting, well thought out classroom focal points and prayer tables with candles.
- Opportunities could be usefully be developed to share identified examples of good practice across the school.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Throughout the school there is a strong sense of the traditions of the Church and the schools journey through the Liturgical year. Good quality displays celebrate the school's Catholic heritage.
- A well prepared programme of assemblies, Masses and liturgies provides opportunities for all classes to participate at an appropriate level. This is planned around the liturgical calendar and the 'Come and See' themes.
- Leaders have good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols. They lead the school in providing and maintaining high quality resources to enrich and develop pupils' understanding.
- School leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of Collective Worship on a regular basis and plan improvements accordingly. As governors often attend Collective Worship it would be beneficial for them to participate in this evaluation through their feedback.