



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 100851

St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School
Forest Hill Road
Honor Oak
London SE23 3LE

Inspection date: 19 November 2014

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Rosie Mohan
Headteacher:	Mrs Jacintha Martin
Inspectors:	Mr Stephen Beck Mrs Margaret Wosiek

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

The school is a voluntary aided school in the Trusteeship of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. It is situated in the Lewisham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Southwark Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Thomas the Apostle, Nunhead and St William of York, Forest Hill.

The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics has reduced over recent times due to increased Catholic places locally and is currently steady at 90%. 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. The number of pupils currently on roll is 408. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is around average. An increasing number of pupils, currently 22%, which is above average, require extra support in class.

Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds, with the vast majority coming from minority ethnic backgrounds, a third from Black African and almost a fifth Black Caribbean origin. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is significantly above average at over 50%, with the majority at an early stage of learning English.

Date of previous inspection:

24/11/2009

Overall Grade:

1

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
1

St Francesca Cabrini School is a highly effective and distinctly Catholic school. It takes the mission of its trustees, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, to 'educate the heart', very seriously. It applies this in the context of endeavouring to ensure each child reaches their full potential and learns to support and help the poor and marginalised in society. This forms a strong foundation for the work of the school and reflects its distinctive character.

Procedures for the monitoring of the Catholic life of the school are developing and the school has clarity of view regarding its strengths and areas for development. It considers that its provision of Catholic Education remains at the outstanding level reported in the last inspection and the inspectors have been able to confirm that in a majority of respects this remains the case. There has been a significant change in demographic over recent years. This has seen an increasingly challenging intake into the school that has been very well catered for and managed.

There is an awareness of what needs to be done to ensure the school's current strengths are maintained and successfully built upon. It is very well placed to continue its high level of performance. The school's self-evaluation gives an indication of the high profile given to Religious Education in the broadest sense and is highly commendable.

St Francesca Cabrini benefits greatly from strong leadership and management. The Headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of a Catholic school and is developing a renewed strong team that shares and is involved in realising that vision over a period of staff changes. The nature of the leadership and management is inclusive and encompasses the deputy, all staff and the governors. This is further enhanced by parents having a positive feeling that they are listened to and are able to make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The school's mission statement is prominent around the school and in documentation. It is kept under review and is a driving force within the school development plan and is clearly lived out in the day to day life of the school. The school could look to developing pupil generated versions of the statement to increase its impact at pupil level.

The school has high expectations of pupils, both in work and behaviour. It is to its credit, that through a period of change the school has retained its focus and remained committed to its core values and to providing the highest possible quality of Catholic Education for its pupils. It engages with the parishes it serves to further develop currently strong links. It is noteworthy that Ofsted commented, "The school's strong Catholic identity supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. There is a clear focus in the school on building relationships and seeking resolutions."

The school has maintained a momentum of improvement, most notably in its strong prayer life and Religious Education curriculum. St Francesca Cabrini School has continued to live up to its Catholic mission as noted in its last inspection, "St Francesca Cabrini lives out its mission to provide a caring and spiritually enriching Catholic environment in which all staff, pupils, parents and governors work together to develop their full potential."

The school has made good progress in regard to the two areas identified in the last inspection as possible areas for improvement. It has reviewed and updated its Religious

Education policy which now reflects practice. The development of interactive marking is becoming embedded across the school and is beginning to impact on pupils' learning and understanding. This reflects a growing awareness of individual pupils' needs with increasing levels of differentiation to meet their needs and this development would benefit from wider opportunities by task as well as outcome.

Assessment procedures are established and the school is aware of the need to link these with their data system for other subjects to provide more in depth analysis of pupil data in Religious Education. Prayer is central to the life of the school and incorporates a wide range of prayer forms.

As a parent wrote, "...good school, strong Catholic ethos, a truly reflective school which welcomes all in the true values of St Francesca Cabrini." Another parent responded to the questionnaire commenting, "I believe this is an outstanding school. All staff work closely together to ensure the happiness and wellbeing of all children, as well as teaching them to a high standard, especially about their faith."

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Consider reviewing the school's approach to sex education as part of their scheme for Education for Personal Relationships in consultation with parents. They should aim to establish a whole school, cross curricular policy, with reference to the *'Diocesan Policy for Education in Human Love'*.
- Continue to develop the school's use of assessment data for Religious Education, to enable assessment to have an even greater impact on planning to meet the needs of all pupils, through more in depth interrogation of the data.
- Develop the Religious Education section of the school's web site to celebrate the Religious Education curriculum and further strengthen information links with parents.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

The school has adapted well to changing demographics over recent years. It has continued to ensure pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and that of their respective parishes with which the school fosters as strong a link as possible. Pupils demonstrate a keenness to take part in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school and to make a contribution themselves. They are very inclusive in their behaviour and acceptance of different backgrounds and needs. They are interested in finding out about other faiths and are fascinated by similarities and differences. This would benefit from developing opportunities for pupils to visit local places of worship to extend their real life experiences in connection with the teaching of other faiths. Pupils are eager to take on responsibility within school and the wider community. They are very aware of the Catholic character of the school, what this means in terms of relationships with God, their behaviour in being ambassadors for the school and in caring for other children, in fact living the Gospel. Through the School Council pupils are able to influence the development of the Catholic character of the school. They are keen to take on this responsibility. It is central to the ethos of St Francesca Cabrini that each child is made in God's image and as such is nurtured so that they develop their unique gifts and value everyone's talents. Pupils look beyond their community to the needs of others, for example through raising funds for the Cabrini School in Ethiopia as well as other adopted local charities. These include The Manna Centre in London, which offers support to the homeless in the locality and St Christopher Hospice. There are annual fund raising events for CAFOD for overseas projects at Harvest Time. The pupils receive regular information about a school in Ethiopia and the work of the Sisters there. The pupils' annual Mission Day has raised pupils' awareness of their place in society and in the world. They have an increased understanding of their role in improving the opportunities and lives of those less fortunate than themselves. The emphasis on these days is the pupils' own 'Call to Mission'.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils attain well in relation to learning outcomes across all areas of the Religious Education Curriculum. Their attainments are evenly high across knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils' attainment at Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at least meets and in some cases exceeds expectations. Improved and more rigorous assessment in Religious Education will ensure standards of attainment are maintained and progress is accelerated. The monitoring of behaviour and attitudes of pupils throughout the school indicate that pupils develop an awareness of their inner selves as well as an awareness of their spiritual and moral development as they progress through the school. This is affirmed by lesson observations, monitoring of behaviour in the playground and in class. Behaviour of pupils throughout the school day is exemplary. Pupils are able to apply what is learned in Religious Education to their own lives and their own spiritual and moral development.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils respond well to Collective Worship of all kinds. They enjoy being involved and are keen to take part. They are taught and given the skills to plan and lead Collective Worship

both in school and church. Collective Worship contributes substantially to children's spiritual and moral development. The Headteacher and staff work together so that all aspects of collective worship are mutually supportive to the community. Pupils are engaged, prayerful, reverent and keen to contribute. They are given opportunities to compose their own prayers which they do from a young age. These are often used in liturgical celebrations. These complement a knowledge and understanding of the traditional prayers of the Church.

In a Key Stage 2 assembly attended on the theme of 'Calling', good use was made of a beautiful focal point and scripture through the story of Samuel. Pupils entered and left the hall reflectively. They were attentive throughout. The assembly concluded with, and was greatly enhanced by, excellent vibrant singing and thought could be given to securing more active engagement in such celebrations.

As a parent commented, "I am happy with the progress my child shows at home – every night they pray before going to bed."

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

St Francesca Cabrini as a Catholic Cabrinian School has a very distinctive character and ethos. The governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher see their role as ensuring the highest possible standards are achieved in all areas of the school's work. The governing body works to fulfil its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation and are ably supported by the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The governors of St Francesca Cabrini are fully committed to developing the Catholic Life of the school. Their strength rests in an understanding of the challenges faced and a drive for improvement and the symbiotic relationship between governors and school leaders. The headteacher's leadership provides a strong vision and sense of purpose. Governors attend prayer times, assemblies and worship wherever possible. School self-evaluation has identified the school's main strengths and areas for development. It would be even more focussed through stronger links with the new Section 48 self-evaluation toolkit and wider contributions from the school community. All members of the school community are committed to deepening pupils' sense of spirituality and faith.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders prioritise Religious Education and seek to ensure that best practice is shared. Time is given for staff training and discussion. They ensure Religious Education has a high profile and is seen as a core subject. Religious education is prioritised in the School Development Plan, is well resourced and receives funding comparable to other core subjects.

The school Chaplain is generous with his time and the Chaplaincy role he provides to the school community is highly valued and much appreciated.

Parents are kept regularly informed of the Religious Education curriculum through a newly established weekly newsletter and information is sent home at special times in the year, October, November, Advent, Lent and Feast Days. Parents receive copies of the Wednesday Word to support work undertaken in school on the Sunday Gospel. Parents are invited to liturgical events and attendance is very good at celebrations throughout the school year. They feel well supported to help their children at home.

The Religious Education coordinator is relatively new to her subject leadership role. She understands the areas for development and has made a positive start to moving this forward. Action points from the last inspection have been partially addressed. The recently revised Religious Education policy is now in place and work has been undertaken to develop interactive marking. Summative marking is very well established and is of a good standard and elements of developmental marking are evident in some classes although a consistency across the school now needs to be secured.

Assessment procedures are established and the school is aware of the need to collate and

analyse data about pupils' attainment and progress in Religious Education in order to identify vulnerable groups, areas for development in teaching and learning and trends over time.

The Religious Education coordinator has undertaken book scrutinies and would benefit from opportunities to observe colleagues in order to have a secure picture of teaching and learning across the school. She will attend Diocesan coordinators meetings and is looking to work with a cluster of Deanery schools initially on the moderation of work.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

Expectations of pupils are as high in Religious Education as in any other core subject. Planning is undertaken for each topic in the 'Come and See' programme under the guidance of the subject leader who monitors plans and gives feedback to the teacher.

Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and show interest. They are challenged and take pride in their work in Religious Education. Pupils behave appropriately and respond well in class, key stage or whole school worship times. 'Let's Celebrate' books kept by each teacher, give an overview and record of achievement in Religious Education and provide an opportunity for class and individual reflection on previous work. The teaching seen during the inspection was predominantly outstanding with none less than good. Lessons are well planned, focussed and delivered with enthusiasm. Excellent subject knowledge is evident, generating great confidence in delivery, resulting in enhanced learning. Learning objectives are clearly identified and revisited throughout lessons. Teachers build well on previous knowledge and give ongoing oral feedback that supports learning. Lesson plans indicate support for the range of ability levels in classes. Teachers make particularly good use of role play, music, drama, discussions and ICT. This sees increasing use of interactive whiteboards and greater use of cross curricular links, which is becoming a strength of lessons. With due importance being given to key words, pupils are gaining a good range of Religious Education vocabulary and this is a growing strength of the religious teaching. Teachers should consider extending opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning and research skills in order to further extend their levels of attainment. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and these have a positive impact on their learning. Very close attention to the social and emotional aspects of learning has a strong impact on pupils' behaviour and personal development.

In lessons seen during the inspection, inspectors were able to confirm the school's view in regard to the high quality of Religious Education teaching. This commences in nursery where pupils were awe struck by an enactment of a Baptism by Year 6 pupils. These young pupils responded positively to their teacher's invitation to pray and were very engaged throughout their carpet session, responding to excellent open ended questioning. Reception pupils were similarly engaged by a parent who brought in her new born baby to discuss with pupils what she needed to do in preparation for her baby to be baptised. This built successfully on prior learning about the sacrament. An excellent Year 4 lesson saw pupils having time in groups to consider 'Signs and Symbols' in Baptism by looking at a range of artefacts including oil, candles etc. This provided both practical learning and excellent discussion opportunities. A Year 1 lesson was notably reflective, built well on previous learning and provided extensive opportunities for talk. Good use was made of a video which supported strong development of religious literacy e.g. anoints, garment. The pupils understood the link between the Sign of the Cross at Baptism and its day to day use. A Year 6 teacher related her personal experience of the release of Nelson Mandela in connection with the topic of 'vocation' and also undertook role play as John the Baptist. Excellent use was made of ICT to exemplify a scripture reading.

In a meeting with pupils they articulated their understanding of vocation by saying, "Mrs Martin's vocation is to improve the school to give us a better understanding about God."

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

Pupils clearly enjoy Religious Education lessons and they understand their value. They are able to apply what they have learnt in the context of their daily lives. They are focussed. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and are eager to complete tasks. They can discuss what they have learnt and show that they are reflective, not only in lessons, but generally. Progress is evident within lessons and over time as reflected in pupil workbooks.

Religious Education is highly valued and would benefit from a more in depth analysis of data to ensure the progress of vulnerable groups is secure. Attainment in Religious Education is evidenced to be high and is at least in line with other national curriculum subjects. Pupils are religiously literate across the school and this is a strength. Pupils settle quickly to work and are able to work individually, in pairs and in groups and rotate these approaches with ease. Pupils confirmed they were required to complete an assessment task at the end of each Religious Education topic. One pupil mentioned that, "*this measured knowledge*", while another said, "nobody knows what is inside your head except God." Behaviour in class is exemplary. As a parent recorded, "The school helps children to grow up knowing right from wrong which assist to alleviate the current troubles young people face in London. I would not change the ethos of the school for anything. It is an outstanding school."

Within the Religious Education curriculum there is a lack of clarity in regard to the provision for Education for Personal Relationships, with specific reference to the school's policy in respect of the teaching of sex education. The school should consider reviewing its approach to sex education, as part of their scheme for Education for Personal Relationships, in consultation with parents, staff and governors with the aim of establishing a whole school cross curricular approach for this area.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

This school more than meets its statutory obligations for worship. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Pupils from an early age are encouraged to develop a prayerful relationship with God. Worship and opportunities for prayer are significant features within the life of the school. There are regular opportunities for collective worship through key stage and whole school assemblies and year group, key stage and whole school Masses, class group assemblies and daily opportunities for individual and class prayer. Significant events in the school and liturgical year are celebrated appropriately through opportunities for prayer. Pupils are encouraged to develop their prayer life through quiet reflective prayer. Opportunities are provided throughout the day in class assemblies. There are stimulating focal points in class and around the school to encourage opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection and to reinforce themes in Religious Education and scripture.

The entrance hall has regular displays which link with the Liturgical Calendar or the current 'Come and See' topic. Displays round the school are of high quality, as are classroom focal points, which are linked to the themes covered in 'Come and See'. They would benefit from more examples of pupils hand written work. Staff are encouraged to be creative in their planning for worship and prayer.

The emphasis being to make prayer and worship relevant and to offer appropriate stimuli to encourage prayerful reflection and worship through: writing, speech, drama, music, dance, song and also meditative and reflective silence. It is clear that pupils throughout

the school see the importance of this aspect of life of the school. Their respectful and attentive behaviour at Assemblies and their participation in prayer opportunities and the celebration of Mass are testimony to this.

Pupils are encouraged to attend opportunities to pray voluntarily in class and at lunchtime, such as, Daily Rosary throughout October, Sacred Heart intentions in June, Prayers of Remembrance in November, Lenten Promises, Advent Promises, Class Prayers and Promises. Parents, too, are encouraged to continue this prayerful relationship with God at these special times at home.

Pupils are encouraged to organise fund raising events for the Cabrini School in Ethiopia as well as other adopted local charities – The Manna Centre in London which offers support to the homeless in the locality and St Christopher's Hospice. There are annual fund raising events for CAFOD for overseas projects at Harvest Time. The pupils receive regular information about the school in Ethiopia and the Work of the Sisters there.

Their annual Mission Day has raised pupils' awareness of their place in society and in the world. They have an increased understanding of their role in improving the opportunities and lives of those less fortunate than themselves. The spiritual life of the school centres around their role in helping and supporting one another, particularly those in most need and this is a very distinctive feature of the School.

The School Council, House System, assemblies, class PSHE sessions and Religious Education lessons provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss and develop a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities for themselves and others. Pupils are trained to take responsibility for younger more vulnerable pupils, emphasising the responsibility we all have to reach out and welcome others.

Responsibility increases as the children go through the school so that by the time the pupils enter Year 6 they are ready to take responsibility and be of service to the organisation and running of the school. This ensures that when they leave Year 6 they are well on their way to understanding their responsibilities and are ready to take their place in society.