

**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  
URN 118765

St Anselm's Catholic Primary School  
Littlebrook Manor Way  
Dartford  
DA1 5EA

Chair of Governors Mr Peter Santer  
Headteacher Mrs Catherine Ward  
Inspectors Mr Gary Tanner  
Mrs Bernadette Dowswell

Inspection dates 26 June 2008

**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

Saint Anselm's Catholic Primary School is voluntary aided and is situated in the Gravesham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Kent Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are Saint Vincent's, Dartford and Saint Anselm's, Dartford. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 87%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in Key Stages One and Two.

The school takes pupils from four to eleven years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 261. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 23% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is higher than the national average. 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

St. Anselm's has a powerful Catholic ethos which pervades all aspects of the school. The strong and very effective headteacher, together with the energetic leadership team, ensure that all staff and pupils strive for personal excellence in their mission of 'living out our Catholic identity as we pray and learn together in a safe and happy family community.' Governors are kept well informed and conscientiously carry out their duties of monitoring the school's performance and activities.

The school is particularly successful in providing care, guidance and support for its pupils, from adults who appreciate and understand their individual needs. Much emphasis is placed on pupil behaviour and from an early age they are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions and to take care of each other. A range of incentives carefully designed to support this mutual consideration also encourages exemplary behaviour and courtesy. Parents are overwhelming in their support for the school and in the pre-inspection questionnaire 89% agreed that the school offers a caring, Catholic environment which helps children to progress well. One parent commented that "the school provides a very caring and spiritual community, this is treasured by most parents....The ethos of the school is highly valued." This survey is endorsed by the school's own annual questionnaires which show parents content with the provision of the school and feel that there is a good relationship between home and school. Recent curriculum change with the introduction of 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme has been carefully and systematically managed.

The last inspection identified three key issues for improvement. These have all been addressed, though the assessment component of the new syllabus is still undergoing evaluation. Other points have also been addressed but marking of pupils' work needs further consideration. Thorough and effective self-evaluation has enabled senior staff in the school to clearly identify the school's strengths and areas for development. They are committed to continuing rigorous monitoring of performance. The school thus has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

## **Grade 2**

### **What steps need to be taken to improve further?**

Continue to refine assessment procedures particularly with regard to marking in order to achieve greater consistency. This should include annotation of work and developmental comments.

# The Catholic life of the school

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Together with senior staff, she is an excellent role model providing strong and clear direction for the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher is well-supported by her assistants and the subject leader. This strongly unified management team shares a common purpose in working to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' education.

Governors are kept well informed and play an active role in monitoring the life of the school. For example, relevant sub-committees share the drafting process for new policies before review and ratification by the whole governing body. One governor has special responsibility for overseeing religious education. The parish priest meets regularly with the headteacher to receive reports on all aspects of religious education in the school. He leads professional development days and in-service training where needs are identified. Some interesting topics have been covered, for example the history of the Church and the nature of Catholicism. There are excellent relationships between all members of the school community. They reflect the Gospel values of care, compassion and concern for others, allied to forgiveness and reconciliation. Specific training is offered to all school staff on giving positive behavioural messages and in a carefully designed briefing, older pupils are taught to be Playground Friends and Young Leaders in order to support those with difficulties. Staff can refer pupils to the Nurture Club and pupils are then invited to attend a lunch time programme if they wish. This valuable facility is led by the subject co-ordinator and operated by a teaching assistant. Much emphasis is placed on dignity and respect for everyone. The home, school, parish partnership is strong with the school offering professional support to parents when needed. The views of parishioners are always canvassed concerning school events, such as the school led parish Masses or concerts, whilst parents' comments are sought more formally in annual questionnaires. Results from the analysis of these opinions are carefully considered and feed into the school improvement plan where appropriate. There are also good links with the local community through involvement in events and with more world wide issues, for example by supporting a particular parish in Peru or through CAFOD charity collections.

## **Grade 1**

### **Quality of provision for personal and collective worship**

Increasingly, the school is becoming the main contact with the Church for many pupils. Accordingly, a detailed review of the provision for prayer and collective worship has been undertaken in order to improve the quality of these experiences for pupils. Two different kinds of liturgies now form the basis of collective worship, alternating each week.

'Quiet Liturgy' consists of the Sunday Gospel reading, planned prior to the celebration in each class, followed by personal reflection on a key point identified by the leader. 'Liturgy of the Word' for younger pupils is teacher led with prepared responses. Both acts of worship seen were of a high quality.

The liturgy for older pupils concentrated on the forthcoming solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul. The gospel reading was enhanced with simple but effective visual aids such as a rock for Peter and with appropriate explanations. The reverent atmosphere was created with an abundance of tea-lights and lit lanterns. Music plays an important part in the school's worship. The singing was first rate, with all pupils involved from the tuneful refrain on entry to the well chosen hymn on leaving. Pupils demonstrated great devotion both during their silent and personal prayer and during the blessing which was spoken and sung by staff and pupils alike. This most spiritual experience was reflected in the Assembly for the Early Years when pupils were fully engaged and absolutely attentive. In this way the school aims to absorb pupils in more meaningful and devotional experiences. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in preparing and presenting the wide range of assemblies and Masses throughout the year. As well as singing enjoyable hymns accompanied by signing, liturgical dance and drama ensures further involvement and an enriched experience for all participants. The school leads a Sunday Parish Mass on a monthly basis, thereby affirming staff witness to the faith and providing a special link between school and parish.

The school Mission Statement proclaims that it is 'a worshipping community' and indeed each school day starts and ends in prayer. Staff gather before school for a brief prayer and every day finishes with the pupils' evening prayers. A main priority for the school this academic year has been the establishment of a quiet area in which pupils and staff can pray undisturbed. With space at a premium, a corner of the stairwell has been sympathetically converted into an area for reflection. Although not ideally positioned, everyone is respectful of the place and its purpose. Pupils' prayers are put in a basket and brought to the altar at liturgies. There are also lovely small crosses for pupils to handle and hold in order to focus their thoughts. Each class has a prominent focal area for prayer. These are generally of a high standard, consistent in reflecting the liturgical season. They incorporate the pupils' own prayers such as "Our Mission Book" in one class. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is effectively promoted throughout the whole curriculum. From an early age pupils are taught to understand right from wrong and how to make a correct choice based on Gospel values. They are shown the impact a chosen course has on others through 'thinking time' and 'sorry cards' and are encouraged to show compassion and care for the less fortunate in society. This developing conscience and sense of concern is widely promoted in the school, preparing the way for reconciliation and First Sacraments. In the upper classes of the school pupils are able to debate and consider deeper moral and ethical issues such as deforestation in South America and its consequent effects on the population and the planet or the results of global warming.

## **Grade 1**

## **Community Cohesion**

The school makes an increasingly strong contribution to the community. The Mission Statement 'To serve the Catholic families of our parish and families of our local community....' is apparent in the life of the school. The headteacher drives this vision by attending local area meetings and promoting the notion of service to the community. Each class interprets the Mission Statement in a child-friendly manner, thus ensuring ownership and always embracing the guiding principle of respect, trust and dignity for each individual. In this way the school can serve and interact with its community with confidence. An Open Day was held recently for all of the community where local organisations were available to offer support and guidance to families. The Family Support Worker provides an important link between the school and other local agencies. The proximity of the Catholic Children's Society enables close contact to be maintained. The Society provides before and after school care as well as holiday schemes. Recent initiatives have been introduced in the form of parenting classes to support parents with the emotional and social aspects of raising their children. High value is placed on the interaction of pupils with those from other schools both Catholic and in local partnerships. There are links with Dartford Grammar School and the choir sings at the Bluewater shopping centre at Christmas. By entering such events as the District Sports, joint school musical performances and curriculum workshops at the Jagger Centre, pupils meet and work alongside those of different faiths, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

Pupils learn about the wider world community through an annual summer term focus on Global Citizenship. Younger pupils have themed weeks studying China, others South America, others South Africa. An annual multi-cultural programme celebrates the backgrounds of many pupils. Heritage Week recognised all the different ethnic origins of pupils including Spanish, Chinese, African, Indian and Irish, with a series of events and cross-curricular activities such as cooking, craft, art design technology and dancing. These events all make the learning experience for pupils as real and first hand as possible and bring pride and self esteem to all. Pupils are involved in their own fundraising activities in connection with the school's charities. Generous sums are raised for CAFOD and for the Catholic Children's Society for example and recently a school picnic was held to highlight the Live Simply campaign. These collections for charity bring awareness to pupils of their responsibilities in the wider community. Links with a Peruvian village, support for Make Poverty History Week and the Fairtrade Foundation further combine to raise recognition of international issues. A range of community agencies regularly visit the school to reinforce these issues.

## **Grade 2**

# Religious education

## Achievement and standards

When pupils enter the Foundation Stage they have skills and knowledge broadly in line with national averages. Well planned and focused teaching in the early years, which strikes a balance between adult-led and independent activities, leads to rapid progress in all areas. By the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils attain or exceed the expected level of 2B in English. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils continue to achieve well in religious education so that, by the end of Year 6, many pupils achieve above national expectations. With a strong system of pupil tracking in place, the school is well aware that written work generally does not always reflect the high standard of written literacy and has taken early action to remedy the situation. Commendably, extended writing has been introduced into religious education and this is now improving. Pupils take pride in their work and presentation is good.

As a result of Staff consultation the school introduced a new RE programme 'The Way the Truth and the Life' in September 2007. Assessment takes place each term, together with summative assessment at the end of a topic.

Targets have been set for pupils who are kept abreast of their progress through regular reviews. These have been formulated combining the new school scheme and the revised Diocesan attainment targets. Together with the new pupil tracking grids in religious education, the school has a comprehensive system in place potentially providing much data to inform individual programme planning. This should ensure that standards continue to rise. Pupils work well in lessons whether individually, with partners or as a group. They contribute confidently and freely respond to questioning. In common with the reports of many schools, St. Anselm's is finding that on entry to Reception, pupils require much guidance on social development. A Positive Behaviour Policy provides guidelines and support structures for all staff to use to ensure consistency across the school.

Pupils presenting particular needs are assessed early and well supported through a variety of strategies. For example, the school has well organised therapy support as well as the Nurture Club. Counselling is also available on an individual basis and the Family Support Worker forms a strong element of guidance. The school's own data analysis shows that pupils with special needs achieve better than their equivalent peers throughout Key Stage 2. This is due to well planned support and direction from teaching assistants.

The religious education syllabus unifies the school's programme for spiritual, moral and cultural development. Older pupils are able to reflect on their relationship with Christ whilst everyone is encouraged to develop a deeper bond with God as part of their personal faith journey. The school's world faith programme is specifically aimed at promoting tolerance and understanding and the value of cultural diversity.

## Grade 2

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

Pupils achieve both personally and academically due to the good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Lessons are well prepared with a common school planning format allied to the new scheme.

Aims and objectives are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson so that each class knows what they will be learning and how their work can be assessed through measurement against the success criteria. Since the introduction of the new scheme of work, both staff and pupils report that lessons are more interesting and stimulating than previously. Pupils refer to improved interaction and partnership work. Good examples were observed in some classes where activities were planned in which pupils were absorbed. In one lesson pupils were each given a different individually wrapped “gift” which consisted of a note of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit to match against a variety of actions. Pupils were asked to reflect on the Gifts in their lives today; some perceptive comments were evident. One pupil wrote “I need to pick up Wisdom on my way to God’s kingdom”. In another lesson pupils were captivated by the teacher’s tale of Peter’s prison escape and all differentiated groups of pupils made very good progress. Reflection time is built into planning, allowing pupils to consider the theme at the start and end of each religious education lesson. Leading questions and prompts often help pupils to focus their thoughts. Ends of lessons allow comparison with earlier opinions and modification of any ideas. These effective plenaries help greatly to consolidate teaching. Teaching assistants play an important role in leading small group activities and are significant helpers to pupils with learning difficulties. Parents are kept informed of the religious education topics being studied.

Assessment is now largely carried out through the structured materials accompanying ‘The Way, the Truth and the Life’ scheme. Also, being a pioneer in the use of concept mapping, the school has decided to retain this method as an effective way of assessing pupils’ knowledge and understanding. Concept mapping allows clear measurement against personal targets which are attached in the front of pupils’ books. Additionally, this year pupils are learning about self-evaluation and gradually becoming more proficient at the process. Ultimately it is envisaged that they will set their own targets for improvement. This good practice should continue and could become a model system. Teachers’ marking is generally constructive and a common format is used for all curriculum subjects. Most pupils are aware of the marking code and appreciate comments on their work. However, marking is still inconsistent between classes and the system would benefit from further consideration. Introducing strategies such as a greater use of developmental comments and interactive marking would stimulate dialogue and thus continue to raise standards.

### **Grade 2**

## **The religious education curriculum**

Following a year's preparation and full training for all staff, with the involvement of the parish priest and governors, the school decided to adopt the new religious education programme 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. Further evaluation is continuing, particularly of the assessment procedures. A final summary report is planned for the end of this academic year.

Some cross-curricular links are evident in teachers' planning and every class now plans part of their literacy time to undertake extended pieces of religious education writing. Interactive white boards form an important tool for teachers.

Pupils now need to be using information communication technology more. The recommended 10% of curriculum time is devoted to teaching religious education. Music is used to enhance assemblies and appropriate compositions set the tone for liturgies whether this is for a reflective or lively occasion. A comprehensive programme for the teaching of other faiths is in place. Thus, Judaism is studied for one week each year and the study of Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism takes place on a rolling basis. The school has hosted speakers from other religious groups including a Jewish representative and a person from the Sikh tradition. There are a few after school clubs such as football, basketball and Spanish and lunchtime skipping. A guitar group and a strings section offer further opportunities for pupils to engage in the wider curriculum.

## **Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management**

The governors, headteacher and senior management team ensure that religious education is accorded a high profile in the school. Together, they form a strong worshipping community living out the Mission Statement of 'providing a Christ-centred education (based on) the Gospel values of truth, justice, honesty, integrity and forgiveness'. In this way the very strong Catholic character and identity of the school is maintained. A sound induction programme is in place to support new or inexperienced members of staff, provided by a knowledgeable and well - informed leadership team. All teaching and support staff undergo an annual performance management assessment. The school always responds to common needs which emerge from these discussions. For example, in order to improve personal faith knowledge, in-service days are sometimes arranged and led by the parish priest. More individual needs are met through the school's planned continuing professional development programme. As a self-improving school, the provision and quality of religious education is accorded appropriate priority. Evaluation of the subject takes place annually and involves input from governors. The religious education subject leader has a very good understanding of the strengths of the subject in the school, leading and supporting staff well. She is very industrious and takes an active part in wider deanery events, including the organisation of deanery development days. Through attendance at Diocesan training days, she is fully aware of any new initiatives and developments. Monitoring of teaching is given due preference and accordingly the whole leadership team share this work. Book trawls and work sampling are built into the annual schedule taking place twice in this year of introducing a new religious education programme. These are rigorously carried out and teachers are given clear written guidance for improvement. With the purchase of

this new scheme the school has committed a considerable part of its budget to upgrading religious education materials. Classes are well provided with texts, interactive whiteboard software, and a range of music and sacramental cloths. Multi-cultural religious resources, such as African Stations of the Cross and tasteful, modern statuary, supplement the more usual artefacts. Through regular review of displays and a planned cycle of changing exhibits to reflect the liturgical season, the well cared for school environment is kept attractive, appealing and stimulating.

## **Grade 1**