

**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 100631

**St Bede's Catholic Infant and Nursery School  
Thornton Road  
Clapham Park  
SW12 0LF**

Chair of Governors	Father Christopher Basden
Headteacher	Cathy Davis and Ewa Ostrynska
Inspectors	Mrs Helen Thompson Mr Patrick Moloney

Inspection dates      6<sup>th</sup> May 2010

**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 Bede's Catholic Infant and Nursery school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Lambeth Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Lambeth LA. The principal parish which the school serves is St Bede's Clapham Park. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 85%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10%.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 7 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 221. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs or disabilities. 15% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The intake reflects a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds. The largest group is Black African, 29%, followed by South American and White European with a growing number coming from Poland. Approximately 57% of pupils have English as an additional language. Spanish, Polish and Portuguese, are the prevalent additional languages spoken. 39% of pupils are at an early stage of English. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St Bede's is a good school with some outstanding features, particularly in relation to its Catholic life. It is a caring and nurturing community that embraces pupils of all abilities and cultures. It has a very strong Catholic ethos with high expectations. Leadership and management is excellent. Pastoral care for pupils and their families is outstanding. The relationships between pupils, staff, parents and Governors are excellent and reflect the Gospel values which are implicit in the Mission statement. Assessment is continuing to develop and pupils make consistent progress to reach the expected National standards by the end of year 2. As a result, the pupils receive a good education. The standard of pupil achievement is good overall and continued dissemination of good practice will ensure standards continue to rise. All issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. The school has a clear vision of the way forward and effective systems of self review and evaluation indicate that it has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

**Grade 2**

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

- Continue to improve assessment by developing a levelled portfolio of pupil work.
- To further improve teaching and learning by disseminating good practice.

## The Catholic life of the school

### **Leadership and management**

**Grade 1**

Leadership and management is a strength of the school. The co-headteachers have a clear vision communicated to all members of the school community. The strong Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life and has a very high profile. It is shared by staff, parents and governors. One parent wrote: "In my opinion it is a very good Catholic school and I can't imagine my son attending any other school." There is a strong sense of teamwork which positively impacts on the quality of education and care given. The governors fulfil their role effectively. The cultural diversity of the school community is reflected in the Governing Body. The Chair, who is also the religious education link governor, is a frequent visitor to the school and monitors the Catholic life of the school very well. As a result, the provision for spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The Parish Priest is an integral part of the school community and this helps to further strengthen the school-parish partnership. The management of the support programmes for the most vulnerable gives excellent pastoral care. This is an inclusive school where every person is valued as a special child of God. Pupils learn to respect and care for one another. As a consequence of this their behaviour is exemplary. Home-school-parish links are strong. Parents have very positive attitudes to the school particularly to the leadership by the co-headteachers of the school.

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

## **Grade 2**

Prayer is central to the life of the school. There is a well-planned programme of assemblies, special celebrations and Masses to mark important occasions throughout the church's liturgical year and linked to the 'Here I Am' religious education programme and SEAL, including Harvest Festival, Stations of the Cross, Advent and Christmas celebrations. All classes have relevant focal areas at the pupils' level. The excellent practice of prayers written by pupils and opportunities for this was evident in some classes. A year one child wrote: "To God I hope you have a lovely day and your twelve disciples. I love you." Pupils know the traditional prayers of the church and their very appropriate school prayers. Morning prayer time is used effectively to give pupils time to reflect and pray at the start of the day. In year 2 pupils used the opportunity to pray for those they were worried about and to support each other in times of need. The religious education coordinator models prayer times for new teachers who are not Catholic as part of her supporting role. The beautiful prayer garden is effectively used for group and personal prayer, reflection and Foundation Stage groups. One of the Reception pupils said "We made a prayer garden for Jesus". The pupils enjoy the area and are planning to plant more flowers to enhance the garden. The pupils came into assembly reverently and were attentive, singing well and contributing with thoughtful answers. There were opportunities for pupils to participate in reading prayers, reflecting and meditating. Their behaviour was excellent. Groups of pupils have the opportunity to celebrate Benediction in the parish church weekly with parishioners. This positively enriches the pupils' spiritual experiences. The school is involving parents and carers more in assemblies.

## **Community Cohesion**

## **Grade 1**

This is a welcoming inclusive community, which fosters a strong sense of belonging. The multicultural, multi ethnic mix within the community is seen as a strength by the school. The inspectors agree with this assessment. The school promotes respect for all by developing pupils' understanding about differences and by valuing their diverse experiences. School literature, including the religious education inspection questionnaires, is available in a range of languages. Translators are available in house for parents for whom English is an additional language. Consequently, all parents are fully informed of the life of the school and their child's progress. This is a happy school where all pupils including those with special needs and English as an additional language know that they are valued and know where to get help if the need arises. Through a wide range of clubs, pupils are encouraged to further their talents and skills and, as a result, the pastoral care offered by the school is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are valued by the school community and make good progress. The school has strong links with local schools in the neighbourhood. The school supports a wide range of charities including The Ace of Clubs, CAFOD and the Haiti Earthquake. The school is also reaching out to the wider community by developing links with a school in South Africa. There are a large number of Polish families within the school and a club has been set up jointly by staff and parents to support this group. A memorable St Nicholas Day celebration was held for the community and Masses are said at the end of each term in school by a Polish priest with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available. In the Foundation Stage, parents are encouraged to come in and read in their home language to the pupils and help with the messages in

Christmas and Mothers' Day cards. The Foundation Stage holds a special Mothers' Day tea party for mums and children. Displays celebrate the cultural diversity of the school; for example, in the hall there is a display entitled, "We've got the whole world in our school" with contributions from all the pupils. The parish toddler group uses the school facilities weekly and there are cultural events across the year, well supported by the parents of all cultures. Links with the junior school are continuing to be developed, with the Senior Leadership Teams of both schools working more collaboratively together. The majority of pupils transfer to St Bernadette's Junior School and the transition arrangements, which are good, are being strengthened.

## Religious education

### **Achievement and standards in religious education**

**Grade 2**

Attainment on entry is below the national average but, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have reached the expected standard and sometimes above. There is no significant difference in progress by gender or ethnicity. Pupils have positive attitudes to religious education. Teachers use appropriate differentiated language and in some classes, the skill of questioning for the more able was outstanding. In discussions teachers give pupils time to share their thoughts and ideas with each other and the adults. Pupils make good progress because teachers have a very good relationship with the pupils, excellent behaviour management strategies and they involve the support staff in the planning. Special needs and English as an additional language pupils are mainly well supported. Classroom displays are based on the 'Here I Am' religious education programme and show progression and continuity through the year groups. Many of the displays are of a very high standard and are a sign of pupils' engagement and understanding of the religious topics covered. Work was mainly well presented.

### **Teaching and learning in religious education**

**Grade 2**

The quality of teaching is good overall with some outstanding features. In the lessons observed pupils were engaged and in the outstanding lessons the pace was excellent with a good balance between teacher and pupil input. Questions and comments made by the teacher were pitched to meet the differentiated needs of the pupils with a good level of challenge for the more able during discussion. Where used effectively, support staff were able to move the teaching and learning forward. Planning was good, and now needs to be more formally evaluated to ensure it builds on previous learning. Learning objectives were clear and focussed on learning. Excellent behaviour management and organisational skills enabled pupils to focus on their learning. Assessment is developing well. Pupil tracking is in place and analysed by staff. Work is moderated but staff have not yet produced a portfolio of levelled work which would ensure consistency across the school. Marking is always affirmative and in some instances included next steps on how to improve. This practice needs to be shared throughout the school. In the reception class the opportunity to observe chicks hatching led to children appreciating, with awe and wonder, God's creation at first hand.

## **The religious education curriculum**

**Grade 2**

The 'Here I Am' religious education programme is fully covered and linked to the liturgical year. Time allocated is in line with the Bishops' Conference recommendation and is well used. Thorough pupil assessment is in place and lessons build on prior attainment and are enriched by cross-curricular links. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Circle Time are all effectively integrated into the religious education of the pupils to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) policy has been drafted by staff and Governors and is ready to be ratified by the Governing Body. Inclusion has a high priority so equality of access is an expectation of all. The teaching of other faiths is embedded in the religious education programme. Pupils learn about other faiths and visit other places of worship such as the local synagogue. Excellent displays reinforce the curriculum, especially the Last Supper and Pentecost displays. The school is well resourced and is now supplementing these with those for Islam. A religious education week is planned for later this term which will involve pupils, parents and governors. The curriculum is relevant, enjoyable and creative and gives opportunities for all pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are eager to share their work and respond well to prayer and reflection time.

## **Leadership and management of religious education**

**Grade 1**

The co-headteachers, parish priest and religious education coordinator work closely together to ensure that religious education remains central to the school's mission and at the heart of the curriculum. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and has produced an excellent booklet for teaching staff. She gives strong and effective support, both formal and informal by assisting with planning, especially with non-Catholic staff, and regular staff meeting input. As a consequence, religious education has a very high status within the school. Staff training has been organised and coordinator meetings attended. The co-ordinator has a clear monitoring role which includes lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutinies. She has identified evaluating plans to include next steps as an area for development and has dedicated time to carry out her monitoring role. The school development plan and religious education action plan are clear and concise with robust achievable goals based on accurate evaluations. The religious education governor is inspirational and commits time and energy to liaise with the staff ensuring that the faith is the foundation of the school. The coordinator files provide a wide range of evidence to show how the subject is delivered and monitored throughout the school. There is a strong collaborative approach to the teaching of religious education by all staff and the school is a joyful and motivating place to be.