

**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 118757

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School
Wilman Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN3 0NX

Chair of Governors
Headteacher
Inspectors

Father Peter Stodart
Mrs J Mann
Mrs Bernadette Dowswell
Mr Stephen Beck

Inspection dates

9 February 2010

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES
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Introduction

Description of the school

St Augustine's is voluntary aided and is situated in the Tunbridge Wells Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Kent LA. The parishes, which the school serves, are St Augustine's, Tunbridge Wells, St Dunstan's, Southborough and St Justus's, Paddock Wood. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 86%. 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 311. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 25% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has grown in recent years and is now about 25%, with the majority from the Philippines. An increasing number of pupils have English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St Augustine's is a school, which has a clear Catholic identity and a very committed staff team. The development of a shared vision to move the school forward has been strengthened by all members of the school community working together to produce a vision statement for the school, which is at present in draft form. The headteacher is a dedicated leader who is committed to the well being of all pupils and to their personal development. Pupils enjoy school and are friendly and polite and generally well behaved. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils respond well to their teachers and generally make good progress as they move through the school. The vast majority of questionnaires received from parents were overwhelmingly positive. Priests from the three parishes, which the school serves, are regular and welcome visitors and well known by pupils, staff and parents. They provide a much valued chaplaincy for the three phases. In addition a parish deacon visits the school each week and gives support to the religious education curriculum. Some progress has been made on the main issues identified in the previous inspection and the school is continuing to improve assessment procedures and provision for the more able pupils. The school would benefit from making the issues identified for development more explicit in the School Improvement Plan.

Grade 2

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Develop assessment procedures to include moderation and levelling of pupils' work, a portfolio of assessed work and individual pupil tracking, in order to raise attainment of all pupils, including the more able.

Ensure that the monitoring of religious education is strengthened, by being more frequent and rigorous to include explicit feedback to individual teachers, in order for monitoring to have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Formulate an action plan for the development of religious education, incorporating a structure, which includes a programme of regular feedback to the governing body.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 2

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is developing well and the headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body are forming a clear vision of Catholic education. There is a shared sense of mission among the staff, who work well together to ensure the Catholic ethos is maintained and developed. The Mission Statement has been reviewed after consultation with all members of the school community. The statement is displayed throughout the school in several languages and is in all school policies. Displays such as the one on St Augustine proclaim the school's Catholic identity. In the last few years the school has placed much emphasis on improving the well-being and involvement of all pupils. The uniqueness of each child is recognised and valued and many displays in the school celebrate this. The partnership with the main parish, which the school serves, is strong and the school is keen to develop more links with the other two neighbouring parishes. Governors are supportive of the Catholic life of the school and the recent allocation of a governor to each class will strengthen this support. The Chair of Governors, who is also the parish priest meets regularly with the headteacher. The governing body are involved in the Catholic life of the school through some visits and attendance at various school events. They now need to consider ways in which they can be more proactive in their role as a 'critical friend' in relation to religious education.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 2

The quality and provision for prayer and worship is good and central to the daily life of the school. The programme of assemblies, Masses and other liturgies help the pupils to be part of a worshipping community. Assemblies are linked to the 'Here I Am' programme, the liturgical year and programmes for personal, social and health education. The assembly for Key Stage 1 pupils on the marriage feast at Cana was led by the headteacher. Pupils were actively involved through the use of role play and the signing of prayers and hymns. They demonstrated a good understanding of miracles, which linked well to the use of prayer and reflection in their daily life. The assembly for Key Stage 2 pupils, which was on the theme of 'People who have inspired us', was led by pupils in Year 5. All pupils showed great interest and were eager to respond. Prayer is an important part of school life. Pupils are learning the traditional prayers of the Church. For example pupils in the reception class were able to pray part of the Hail Mary with some actions. There was some evidence of pupils composing their own prayers and all pupils are given opportunities for quiet reflection. Consideration should be given to widening the range of pupils' prayer experiences, to include such elements as spontaneous prayer, meditation and voluntary prayer times. Mass is celebrated in school at various times during the year for the whole school and for key stages. Pupils are involved in these celebrations through taking part in the readings, bidding prayers, offertory procession and music. Parents are

welcomed to all Masses. Once each year the school is involved in a Sunday Mass at the parish church. Some other liturgies take place, for example for Harvest and Mother's Day and Ash Wednesday. Older pupils are given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. The school policy for Collective Worship is in draft form and, when it is finalised, the school needs to ensure that it is specific to St Augustine's and reflects present school practice.

Community Cohesion

Grade 3

St Augustine's school is a harmonious community where Gospel values are lived out in the daily life of the school. Pupils are happy, feel safe and are confident they have someone to whom they can talk if they have a concern. In recent years the school has welcomed many pupils from the Filipino and Polish communities and these pupils are quickly integrated into this happy school. All pupils, including those with additional needs and those who speak little English, are valued and welcomed. From the beginning of their time at the school, pupils learn that they are all members of God's family and are helped to show respect and consideration for each other. This can be seen in the way pupils play and work happily together. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in their school through such initiatives as the buddy system. The School Council makes a growing contribution to school life and had some input into the development of the outdoor play areas. The school seeks and takes account of the views of parents on various issues. Links with the parishes are good and many staff are actively involved in these parishes, for example, in helping with the children's liturgy and the Baptismal programme. These provide further links between the school and the parish communities. The school has a very good partnership with the local Catholic comprehensive school. Some pupils go for tuition in sports and for art and dance festivals. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 visit for taster days and teachers from the secondary school visit to share ideas and aid transition. Some older pupils help to run after school clubs at the primary school. Pupils are encouraged to think about those less fortunate than themselves, both in their local community through things such as 'Soup Bowl' and collecting socks and gloves for the homeless and in the wider community, through CAFOD and Water Aid. The International Week, which was organised last year, gave pupils, parents and staff opportunities to come together and to experience the rich diversity of nationalities and cultures within the school community. Through one of the parishes the school also has some links with a parish in Cambodia. The opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness and understanding of other cultures and faiths in British society as a whole and in the wider world are limited. The school recognises this and now needs to consider planning a programme of visitors from other faiths and cultures to talk to the pupils and for pupils to visit other places of worship.

Religious education

Achievement and standards in religious education

Grade 2

The majority of pupils start school with skills and abilities in line with national expectations. A growing number of pupils are, however, entering school with English as an additional language with many being at the early stage of learning English. The attainment of pupils overall is good and by the end of Year 6 most pupils meet age-related levels and some attain the higher level. As a result of very good induction procedures and the excellent work of the Foundation, team pupils get an excellent start to school life. These young pupils make very good progress in religious education and good progress is maintained as pupils move through the school. Pupils are developing a good knowledge of the faith and of Scripture. Year 1 pupils knew about the Last Supper and how it linked with the Mass and Year 3 pupils could recall the story of Zaccheus and its meaning. It was commendable that members of the school council were able to articulate five of the seven Sacraments with ease and confidence. Older pupils are confident in finding passages in the Bible and are developing good empathetic skills. Pupils have a good religious vocabulary and there is evidence of this even in the reception class. Pupils have positive attitudes to religious education and, in lessons seen and through discussions with pupils, it is clear that they enjoy them. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups.

Teaching and learning in religious education

Grade 2

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers deliver religious education with enthusiasm and confidence. They have very good knowledge of the Catholic faith and a high number of them have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Lessons are marked by a brisk pace and skilled questioning techniques by teachers. In some lessons pupils were more engaged when the tasks and activities were well matched to the abilities of all pupils and, consequently, better met the needs of the more able. This good practice needs to be shared, as the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Teachers have high expectations and establish good relationships with their pupils. Together with very good classroom management skills this creates a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Music is sometimes used to further enhance the classroom atmosphere. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard to stimulate and maintain pupils' interest. Teaching assistants and teachers work closely together and this has a direct impact on pupil learning and progress. Teachers use a variety of resources in their lessons, and often plan a wide range of activities such as role play, writing, drawing and modelling. Opportunities for more independent learning and research are developing in upper Key Stage 2 and, if these were extended to other classes, it would provide more challenge for able pupils. Assessment of pupils' work continues to be at an early stage of development. The school should now, as a matter of priority, undertake some moderation exercises and develop the use of levelling of pupils' work in order to firmly embed assessment practices that will raise attainment. All pupils' work is

marked with positive comments but there is little evidence of marking which helps pupils know what they need to do to improve. The school is introducing developmental marking in other subjects and it is hoped that this will soon be extended to religious education

The religious education curriculum

Grade 2

The school follows the Diocesan recommended religious education programme, 'Here I Am', for the teaching of religious education and 10% of teaching time is allocated to the subject. The curriculum builds on prior attainment and teachers endeavour to make it relevant to the experience and life of pupils. Pupils with additional needs and those not fluent in English are very well supported by teaching assistants who work skilfully, sensitively and discreetly to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum and make good progress. Medium term planning is very good. Teachers use the Diocesan planning sheets and annotate them to meet the needs of their pupils. While some good evidence of differentiated tasks was seen in lessons, much of the work in pupils' books shows that differentiation is often by outcome. The policy for religious education needs to be reviewed to include more specific detail and guidance on such issues as assessment. In its review the school should ensure that it refers to Diocesan guidelines and that the policy includes all the recommended elements. Good use of cross curricular links is made in some lessons, for example literacy, art, history and geography. The parish deacon makes a good contribution to the curriculum, visiting classes and supporting and supplementing the religious education curriculum and his contribution is appreciated by staff and pupils. The school has a satisfactory supply of resources including software and some for the teaching of other faiths. These need to be increased as funds allow. The religious education curriculum is integrated with elements of the programme of study for personal, health and social education and the materials for the emotional development of pupils when appropriate. Together they contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development and help to prepare them for life in society today. The policy for Human Love and Relationships is set in the context of Catholic values.

Leadership and management of religious education

Grade 3

Leadership and management in religious education is continuing to develop. At the time of the inspection the co-ordinator had been on maternity leave for three months and the role was being undertaken by the deputy headteacher. With the school having necessarily focussed on other priorities there has been less focus on religious education, which has been appropriately maintained but now needs to move forward. The staff demonstrates very good knowledge of the subject and a strong commitment, which could be usefully channelled into developing the school's programme for religious education. The school may wish to consider establishing a religious education team for the overall management of this area. While there is a programme of monitoring the curriculum, which includes some lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books, it is not frequent or rigorous enough to raise standards. The school improvement plan should include a focus on securing

consistency in religious education across the whole school, and particularly in the areas of marking, differentiation, presentation and provision for more able pupils in order to raise attainment. Governors are aware of the need to be more informed and involved in the religious education of pupils. The link governor is keen to develop his role and the school needs to establish structures to facilitate this, ensuring that the information governors receive is more closely linked to standards and attainment.