

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT
URN 101816**

St James the Great RC Primary
and Nursery School
Windsor Road,
Thornton Heath,
Surrey CR7 8HJ

Chair of Governors Mr Edwin Abreo
Headteacher Mr Stephen Beck
Inspectors Mrs Marion Betts
Mrs Joan Lenahan

Inspection dates 6th November 2008

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**
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Description of the school

St James the Great RC school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Croydon LA. The school principally serves the parishes of St Andrew's, Thornton Heath and St Bartholomew's, Norbury. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 100%. 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 admits pupils from 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 473. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of those who receive extra support in class are both below the national average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority heritages is high when compared nationally. Whilst a higher proportion than is typical nationally has a home language other than English, only a few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

St James the Great School has a very strong Catholic ethos with committed leadership from the headteacher and governors who are instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity. All staff are committed to upholding the ethos and success of the school. Prayer and worship have a prominent role in the school's life. Relationships within the whole school community are very good. One child explained "we are a big loving, learning family here". The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. Religious education holds a high profile in the school. Pupils achieve well in this subject. Teaching and learning is effective and good progress is made by all the pupils. The improvement issues from the last inspection have been well addressed. The self-evaluation process involves staff and governors. The views of parents and pupils are also sought. The school has a good capacity to continue to maintain quality practice and to improve. This is due to an accurate knowledge of its strengths and development needs.

Grade 1

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors and leadership should:

Produce a portfolio of pupils' work levelled against national levels of attainment so that assessed outcomes are used to inform future planning and raise standards.

Develop marking procedures so that pupils are aware of how they could improve and are given opportunities to make the improvements.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear direction for the school's Catholic life and promotes unity of purpose within the staff team extremely well. The staff, have a strong sense of the Catholic mission of the school and act as very good role models. The governors share the school's vision and are very supportive. The mission statement is understood by the whole school community and permeates all aspects of school life. Many attractive displays explicitly emphasise the Catholic ethos and community. The pupils display respect and courtesy towards each other and adults. They demonstrate this very effectively by the responsibilities they exercise to care for each other such as squabble busters, buddies and play leaders. Pupils value the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them and encourage their learning. Leadership promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very well by providing a wide range of spiritual and educational enrichment activities.

Pupils' achievements are recognised and valued. Very positive relationships and links exist between home, school and parishes. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent wrote "The atmosphere of school is remarkably warm and uplifting". The parish priests are an integral part of the school community.

Grade 1

Quality of provision for prayer and collective worship

Prayer is an integral part of each school day. A very good variety of worship opportunities are given throughout the Church's year and also as part of the pupils' religious education learning. Pupils are given opportunities to pray for their own intentions and also to reflect on how they might apply the worship theme to their own experiences. They understand the significance of prayer in their own lives. The Oratory is used regularly for reflective prayer by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils write their own prayers and use these within their worship. Each class plans and presents an assembly and prayer service. Visual presentations, stories, drama, dance and high quality singing are all used to enhance the worship experience. Pupils enjoy worship sessions, are attentive and responsive. They behave very well. Mass is celebrated regularly along with the parish community and parents are invited to all these services. Penitential services are offered. Worship is well planned and evaluations lead to improvements being made. Worship contributes very effectively to pupils' spiritual and moral development. It faithfully reflects the Catholic mission and community of the school. The parish priests make a valuable contribution to the sacramental life of the school.

Grade 1

Community Cohesion

The school is very active in its outreach work to others. Families are highly involved in school life. Links between the staff and other local schools are extremely strong and the expertise of staff is shared at all levels. The governors are very supportive of outreach projects and the sharing of their resources to the local community. The school raises money for local, national and international causes. Within school there is an inclusive and welcoming ethos where every individual is valued and their strengths celebrated. The school welcomes many visitors from the local and other communities to share their experiences. Plans to increase links with the Polish parish from which some pupils come, are being made. Provision for spiritual development within worship and religious education lessons provides reflection opportunities for all to link the theme with their own experiences. Pupils learn about other faiths as part of their religious education curriculum but have not recently undertaken visits to other faith places of worship or invited local people in to share their expertise.

Grade 1

Religious education

Achievement and standards

Pupils are gaining religious education knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. They are able to apply this learning to their own lives and experience. Most pupils meet age appropriate levels of attainment and some achieve above this. The children take a pride in their written work which is well presented. Pupils' oral responses are good but this standard is not always reflected in their written work. Books evidence a satisfactory coverage of the scheme of work with a variety of written activities including Bible research. Pupils engage very well during lessons and their behaviour is good. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons, especially when undertaking practical activities and when they are given opportunities to discuss their own thoughts and ideas.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching is good overall with some outstanding aspects. The teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and planning is thorough. They effectively use appropriate resources and visual aids to maintain the pupils' interest and incorporate both talking partners and group work to motivate their learning. The learning objective is made clear to the pupils and key words emphasised. Questioning is used well and develops pupils' thinking. Tasks were suitably chosen to reinforce learning. All pupils could access the learning and where necessary extra support was given. Assessments at the end of each topic are used to note pupils' religious education knowledge and understanding. The school plans to moderate these to ensure consistency of attainment levels. Marking gives praise and encouraging comments but does not yet inform pupils how they could improve their work or allow them time to make these improvements. Parents are given information of future religious education topics and how they could help with the learning at home.

Grade 2

The religious education curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good and suited to the age of the learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Here I Am" programme, with extra work linked to the liturgical year and the lives of saints. A Bible Study club is very well attended. Religious education is linked with other areas of the curriculum, particularly with drama, literacy, art, music, other cultures and with information and communication technology (ICT). The school is planning more explicit religious education links with the pupils' personal, health, social and

citizenship education (PHSCE) and with the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme. The curriculum makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils are taught to respect other faiths. The church and parish priests are used well as extra resources for learning. Attractive religious education displays give added value to this core subject.

Grade 2

Leadership and management

The religious education co-ordinators, with strong support from the headteacher give a high profile to this subject and its contribution to the school's educational mission of the Church. They are enthusiastic and devise appropriate and comprehensive action plans which are part of the whole school improvement programme. They undertake regular training and guide teachers well. Teachers plan together and are supported by an experienced Catholic teacher within each team. The co-ordinators lead staff training and a reflection session on the future topic. Religious education is effectively managed. The religious education governor is informed of developments and regularly visits the school. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well and the school is sensitive to anti-discriminatory practices. This year one performance management objective for each member of staff is related to religious education. The headteacher and governors encourage staff to undertake the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies qualification. Religious education is well resourced.

Grade 2