



# Diocese of Westminster

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## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School**

Horseshoe Lane, Gadston, Watford, Herts. WD25 7HP

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DfES Number: 919 5211

URN:117571

Headteacher: Ms P. Curran

Chair of Governors: Mr P. Quinn

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Date of previous inspection: November 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

## **Description of School**

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School is a one form entry school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are 226 pupils on roll, 97% of whom are Catholic. There are 9 teachers in the school of whom 8 (88%) are Catholic. The majority of pupils come from the parish of Our Lady and St Michael's Church. A small number attend from the parishes of St Helen and Holy Rood, Watford. Only a few pupils are entitled to free school meals. A quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, although most speak English well. The school is situated on the same site as St Michael's Catholic Secondary School.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

St Catherine's is an outstanding Catholic school. The extremely strong Catholic identity is present in the school's daily life. The committed leadership of the headteacher, religious education subject leaders, and governors is instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the Catholic ethos. Prayer and worship have a very strong central role in the school's life. Relationships within the school are very good and reflect Christian respect and concern for others. The pupils explained "We all care for each other here and are one big family". The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. The standards achieved in religious education are high. Very good progress is achieved by all pupils. Staff are committed to the high profile given to this subject in the school.

**Grade 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The last diocesan inspection report described the school as a good Catholic School. The issues for improvement related to using ICT (information and communication technology) by children to support their learning and in presentation of work; developing assessment to ensure consistency of levelling as well ensuring it reflects achievement at every level of attainment. All these issues have been fully addressed. ICT is now used extremely well to promote learning through pupil researching, devising power point presentations and creating art works to express their ideas and thoughts. Assessments are now moderated across the school to ensure consistency of judgements and pupil progress is recorded. The levels have been broken down into smaller divisions so that small progress is easier to determine.

**Grade 1**

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

The headteacher, religious education subject leaders and governors through their Catholicity committee undertake thorough monitoring and have a good oversight of the school's strengths and development needs. They promote a clear vision which is well supported by the staff. The staff are committed to the success of the school and to improve their skills by attending Catholic courses. Outside Catholic consultants are used effectively to deliver training to increase skills and religious education subject knowledge. The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

**Grade 1**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Enhance the teaching about other faiths by using visits and visitors as extra resources for learning.
  - Provide opportunities for pupils to work with those from other faith backgrounds.
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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The headteacher, RE subject leaders and governors form an effective partnership for promoting the Catholic life of the school. They communicate a clear vision of Catholic life which inspires the fullest possible faith development of pupils. The school mission statement "Live, love and learn joyfully together through Jesus and His Church" is understood by the pupils and integral to all aspects of the school's daily life. High quality displays around school confirm the Catholic identity. Governors are pro-active in assessing developments for the school and increasing the range of Catholic links. Relationships within the whole community are very good with the school providing high quality care to meet the needs of all pupils and their families. Leadership promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very well. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities to help other pupils and their views are sought and acted upon. They value and praise the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them, help them to solve any problems and encourage their learning. They describe the teachers as "loving and kind". The school has good links with parents. Strong links are being built with Catholic communities in the area. St Michael's school chaplain is known well by pupils. He has organised visits of groups of mixed age pupils to the school chapel.

**Grade 1**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Worship and prayer is an integral part of each school day and of all religious education lessons. Pupils from the earliest years help to plan, prepare and lead worship. They write prayers and chose suitable objects for their prayer focus both during daily class worship and during the celebration at the end of the religious education topic. Pupils are given opportunities to pray their own intentions. Visual aids often produced by the pupils themselves, and high quality singing enrich the worship experience. Pupils are very respectful during prayer, participate with sincerity and enjoy these experiences. They appreciate the quiet time given for them to reflect on the message. Mass is celebrated regularly. Parents are invited to these as well as to other celebrations held. Prayer and worship have a very strong impact on pupils' spiritual development.

**Grade 1**

### **How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?**

The school is a welcoming and inclusive community. The rich diversity of cultures within the school is positively valued and celebrated. Plans are being made for pupils to work with others from different faith backgrounds and teachers have built links with a local community school to facilitate this. The school has extremely good links with the adjoining Secondary school. Communication with parents is very good. They are invited to share in all services and celebrations. Teaching about other faiths has a positive effect on pupils' understanding of other beliefs within the local community. Worship provides reflection opportunities for all to link the

theme with their own experiences. The pupils show their compassion for others and understand they are living out their Catholic duty by supporting local, national and international charities. Visitors are invited to share their experiences, for example during the recent disability awareness day. The older pupils share their talents with people living in the local area.

**Grade 2**

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## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

All pupils are gaining religious literacy at a very good rate throughout their school life and display a growing depth of thought. The standards gained in religious education are high with some pupils exceeding national expectations. Pupils are gaining an understanding of the life and teaching of the Catholic Church and are able to apply this to their own experience. They strive to link their daily lives with Catholic values. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' books are very well presented. They evidence a full coverage of the curriculum with a good variety of written outcomes. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when writing prayers or when the tasks involve practical cross curricular activities. They work well together in groups.

**Grade 1**

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

Teaching is good overall. Outstanding teaching was observed in lessons that were lively, interesting and engaging. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan thoroughly with clear learning objectives and success criteria made explicit to the pupils. Open questioning and talking partners are used well and develop pupils' confidence in their ideas. Teaching uses visual presentation to maintain the interest of the pupils and allow them to reflect on the learning. The activities planned consolidate and develop all the pupils' thinking. Work is differentiated by a variety of tasks to challenge the children at the correct level. The committed and experienced support staff make a good contribution to encourage the learning of all children. Work is very well marked, giving suitable praise with feedback concerning improvement strategies. Pupils are given opportunities to respond to the marking and make the improvements. Pupils' self-assessment and peer assessments are effectively used to judge the quality of work. The school's assessment procedures are very thorough. Regular assessments recording pupils' attainment are used to ensure progression. Moderation to ensure consistency of achievement with national expectations is undertaken regularly. A portfolio has been devised of levelled work explaining the criteria for the judgement and future next steps. Assessments are used very well to plan pupils' future learning. Parents are given information about future religious education topics and ways of helping with this learning at home. Families are sometimes involved in homework tasks.

**Grade 1**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is very good, and suitable for the age of the learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. Over 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education using the "Here I Am" programme and other work linked to an understanding of the Catholic faith, such as the qualities of personality that made St Catherine of Siena a saint. Pupils are encouraged to question and reflect so becoming aware of the demands of religious

commitment in everyday life. "Big Question" books allow pupils the opportunity to state the questions which are pertinent to them for their understanding of the topic. Scripture is used very well to illustrate learning. The religious education curriculum is linked creatively with other areas of the curriculum, particularly with ICT, drama, literacy, poetry, and art. All religious education lessons include prayer and a time of reflection on the theme and this contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils are taught to respect other faiths. Attractive religious education displays with key words give added value to this core subject. The chaplain of the secondary school is used well as an extra resource for learning. Pupils regularly visit the local Catholic retreat centre to provide additional understanding and skills of religious education.

**Grade 1**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The two RE subject leaders, well supported by the headteacher, ensure this subject has the highest profile across the school. The pupils know how important it is and that teachers take it very seriously. Teachers attend courses and invite other professionals to lead training in the school. The subject leaders guide and support teachers well. Classes are organised so that experienced teachers plan alongside less experienced staff. Rigorous monitoring ensures that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. The RE governor also takes on a monitoring role. One teacher holds the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification and three more teachers are on the course. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well and the school is sensitive to anti-discriminatory practices. The budget for religious education and worship is high and above that allocated to other core subjects. The school is well resourced for delivering the curriculum.

**Grade 1**