



*Archdiocese of Westminster*

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School**

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DfES Number: 304/3506

URN: 101543

Acting Headteacher: Mrs S. Kelly

Chair of Governors: Mr P. Manning

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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: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007  
Date of previous inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

## Description of School

St Robert Southwell school is a one and a half form entry school with part-time nursery provision for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. There are 365 pupils on roll, 98% of whom are Catholic. The majority of pupils come from the parish of St Sebastian and St Pancras. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average. The percentage of minority ethnic pupils is above average. The largest ethnic group, apart from White British, is White Irish. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is just below average. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher who began work in January 2007.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Robert Southwell Primary School has a strong Catholic ethos with committed leadership from the acting headteacher, deputy, religious education co-ordinator and governors who are instrumental in effectively maintaining the school's Catholic identity. Prayer has a strong central role in the school's life. Staff provide a secure and stimulating environment in which the pupils thrive and achieve high standards. Relationships within the school are very good and based on Christian care and concern for others. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour and attitudes. The religious education co-ordinator leads and manages the religious education curriculum very well. The staff are committed to the high profile given to religious education in the school. Good progress is made by the pupils in religious education.

**Grade 2**

### Improvement since the last inspection

The last inspection report described the school as "an excellent example of a strong Christian community". Areas for development were related to setting different levels of written work so that all pupils were able to achieve well, and ensuring the marking policy was applied consistently. The school has made a good response to these areas. Teachers' plans now refer to differentiation. This often occurs by varying the depths of questioning, outcomes of pupils' work and by the extra support given. Occasionally different levels of task are set and challenging extension work is given. Marking is now consistent throughout the school and is of a good standard. Teachers write praise and comments relating to the religious education knowledge, learning objective and depth of thought.

**Grade 2**

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

The school's capacity to improve is good. The acting headteacher, deputy and religious education co-ordinator have a very good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. Extending formal monitoring strategies would ensure that areas for development are identified from evaluations. The school development plan includes targets to maintain the standards of the school's Catholic life and improve religious education. Staff are committed to the success of the school.

**Grade 2**

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

- Extend the school's formal monitoring procedures to include Catholic life, worship and religious education lesson observations by senior staff
- Devise from the mission statement a summary that can be fully understood and applied by all pupils.
- Extend the school's marking procedures so that pupils are led to think further about their response and follow improvement strategies.

## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

Leadership and management are strongly focused on maintaining the school's strong Catholic identity. The mission statement is comprehensive and includes creating "a community which reflects the values of the Gospel". It encompasses all the school is striving to achieve but is not known in detail by the pupils. High quality displays around the school reflect the school's Christian mission. The governors are very supportive of the school and during regular visits they monitor informally. The teachers are committed to the faith development of the pupils. The pupils have great pride in their school and value the caring attitude of the staff. Their views are taken into consideration through a school council and their ideas have been acted upon. The leadership promotes extremely well pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school has good links with the parish and further links are planned. The parish priest is known well by the pupils. Pupils' achievements are recognised and valued. The pupils support those in need and raise money for charities. A good range of extra curricular activities is provided.

**Grade 2**

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

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school community. Pupils are provided with a range of creative and reflective opportunities to engage in prayer and worship. Drama and high quality singing enhances the quality of the worship. A prayer room is used well during Lent and Advent. Acts of worship engage pupils' interest and develop their thinking. Pupils are also given reflection opportunities during religious education, to think how they might apply the learning to their own lives. Pupils write their own prayers and often use these within worship. There are prayer tables within each classroom which reflect the liturgical year. Mass is celebrated on Holy Days by the whole school, and on occasions this occurs in the parish church. Penitential services take place in Advent and Lent. Pupils enjoy worship especially the Bible stories and drama. They are involved regularly by presenting their class assemblies. Parents are invited on these occasions and attendance is high. Worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

**Grade 1**

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## **Religious Education**

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

The standard learners achieve in religious education is very high. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages. Teacher assessment indicates that pupils are working well and in line with their ability. The pupils have a secure understanding of

the life and teachings of the Catholic Church. They are able to articulate what they have learnt, express opinions and work collaboratively and independently. Pupils have great pride in their work which is well presented. A very good coverage of the religious education programme was evidenced. The pupils' books contain a variety of imaginative work including bible research. The pupils enjoy religious education especially when it is linked with the creative curriculum. Their personal, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

**Grade 1**

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

Teaching and learning is overall good. Lessons are well planned. Teaching effectively uses visual material to interest and motivate the pupils such as an Easter garden, hot cross buns, and video and pictures using the interactive whiteboards. Tasks given consolidated the learning and were appropriate to the different ages of pupils. Work is well marked, giving suitable praise and comments but does not show the pupils how they could improve. Assessments are completed regularly. Outcomes are recorded against levels of national expectations. Pupils' progress is recorded but this information is not yet used to create targets. Parents receive information about religious education topics and how they can support this learning at home. Occasionally religious education homework is given which is linked to researching a topic or further develop pupils' thinking, for example devising their own Lenten calendar.

**Grade 2**

### **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. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Here I Am" programme with additional work linked to the liturgical year. Pupils are encouraged to question, discuss, investigate and reflect so becoming aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Full advantage is taken to link religious education with creative areas of the curriculum, particularly in drama, art, craft, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils are taught to respect other faiths and those chosen reflect the local community. Visitors are welcomed as an extra resource for this learning. Pupils undertake visits to other places of worship and to Catholic retreat centres.

**Grade 1**

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

The religious education co-ordinator is experienced and energetic. As a part of the senior management team, she gives a high profile to this subject and its contribution to the educational mission of the Church. She is well supported by the acting headteacher and deputy. She leads regular reflections with the staff at the beginning of each topic and also leads training sessions when appropriate. The subject is effectively managed. The addition of lesson observations to her monitoring schedule would ensure thorough quality assurance and lead to future plans being linked to evaluations. The school is sensitive to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices. Nine teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. The budget for religious education is in line with that allocated to other core subjects. Learning resources are very good. Creative and stimulating resources are continually being purchased.

**Grade 2**