



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark

URN 100638

Bishop Thomas Grant Secondary School

Belltrees Grove

Streatham

SW16 2HY

Inspection date: 8th & 9th November 2017

Chair of Governors: Stephen Beck

Headteacher: Bernadette Boyle

**Inspectors: Tom Cahill
Damian Fox**

EDUCATION COMMISSION

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR
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Interim Director of Education: Stephen Bryan

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Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bishop Thomas Grant is an oversubscribed mixed voluntary aided comprehensive school. It has been serving the local Catholic community for almost 60 years. It is situated in the Lambeth Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is maintained by Lambeth Local Authority. The principal parishes, which the school serves, are St Andrew's, Thornton Heath; St Bartholomew's, Norbury; English Martyrs, Streatham; Virgo Fidelis, Upper Norwood and St Matthew's, West Norwood. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is approximately 97%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in each of the key stages.

The school takes pupils from 11 to 19 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 1,198. The attainment of most pupils on entering the school is above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 11% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) is above national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is above national average. The largest ethnic minority group at the school are pupils from Any Other White background many of whom are Polish, Hispanic, or Portuguese. Black or Black British - the majority belonging to the African community – are the second largest group followed by Irish and White British.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Bishop Thomas Grant is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Headteacher, senior leaders and Governors provide outstanding Catholic leadership to all stakeholders.
- The school provides outstanding pastoral care and support to all of its pupils allowing each one to thrive in an exceptionally safe environment.
- The mature and highly positive attitudes to learning shown by the pupils together with their exemplary behaviour provides an outstanding learning environment where all pupils can reach their full potential.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching in Religious Education and the outcomes for pupils has significantly improved. Pupils make excellent progress in Religious Education and as a result their outcomes are outstanding.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- By sharing good practice and effective professional development, ensure all teachers in the Religious Education Department are able to deliver outstanding teaching on a regular basis.
- To develop a pupil led chaplaincy provision in order to provide more opportunities for pupils to participate in high quality faith based experiences.
- Review the allocation of roles and responsibilities within the Religious Education department.



Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education:

1

Catholic Life

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

Religious Education

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

2

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

1

Collective Worship

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

1

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

1

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils derive huge benefit from attending Bishop Thomas Grant where prayer and Collective Worship is central to the life of this highly inclusive Faith community. They are proud to be part of this 'telling school' where they are encouraged to tell staff of any concerns they might have and their wellbeing is always top priority.
- Under the outstanding leadership of the Headteacher together with other senior leaders, pupils work and play in a safe and caring environment where each is valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and are based on mutual respect and a belief that they are there to serve rather than be served.
- The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary whether in lessons, around the school or in the playground. They respond positively to the very high expectations of all staff who consistently provide excellent role models to the pupils. This mature and respectful behaviour makes a significant contribution to the learning environment and the strong Catholic Ethos that permeates the school.
- Pupils were overwhelmingly positive in the views they expressed to inspectors about their school. They talked about being part a family where everyone is valued, respected and cared for and where there was a real sense of belonging. They value the dedication and commitment of all staff. They felt the teachers and support staff went the extra mile to care for and support them. As a result of this outstanding pastoral care the school has high attendance rates and a very low exclusion rate.
- Pupils from the School Council told inspectors that they felt part of a family and were listened to by staff. They spoke warmly of the four key values the school promotes namely: keep safe; be happy; learn and achieve; and grow in love of their faith. They said the school motto 'To unite all things in Christ' is lived by all and that love and respect permeated every aspect of school life.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to take on responsibility and to help and serve others. Prefects play an important role in promoting the distinctive ethos of the school. Pupils are also actively involved in the School Council and Wellbeing Council. The school actively seeks their views and pupils have been invited to meetings with governors ensuring their voice is heard. They also benefit from a wide range of extracurricular activities including a range of trips both nationally and internationally.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and respond well to those are less fortunate. They have raised significant sums of money for good causes including: victims of the Grenfell Tower fire; Spires, a local homeless charity;



The Children's Trust; The Salesian Sisters; Aid to the Church in Need; Kids for Kids and CAFOD. Each of the four School Houses nominates a charity which they support during the year.

- Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school in the questionnaires they completed and in meetings held with inspectors. As one parent wrote "We feel very blessed to have our son at Bishop Thomas Grant. It is a spiritual and faithful community. Strong ethics, gospel values and commitment have been shown by all staff we have encountered." Another parent wrote "My children are extremely happy at Bishop Thomas Grant and for us this is our first priority. It is an amazing school with wonderful caring staff and where the values of the Gospels are lived out every day."

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

- The school is distinctly Catholic. The range of religious icons and images on prominent display around the school reflects its mission.
- The centrally located chapel is at the heart of the school. It is used for the weekly Mass, praying the Rosary and for personal reflection. One wall of the chapel is dedicated to pictures of deceased past pupils and staff so that they will never be forgotten. The chapel is always accessible allowing pupils and staff to visit for quiet prayer and reflection.
- The dedicated and committed Chaplain is well known by all pupils and staff. She is an outstanding role model who is comfortable sharing her faith with all in the school. She ensures the pupils are provided with carefully planned, high quality Collective Worship that meets the needs of all pupils.
- The Chaplain provides a much-needed counselling service to both pupils and staff although the school also commits significant resources to pay for external counsellors to support pupils. Staff also have an opportunity to attend weekly meditation.
- Pupils would benefit from the development of a pupil led chaplaincy team. This would allow tasks to be shared as the Chaplain is only at the school 2 days a week. Such a team could further develop the retreat programme offered by the school.
- A notable development at the school this year was the opening of the new provision at risk of exclusion, "Bridges." This new resource shows the school's commitment to all pupils in providing a caring and nurturing environment for those who find school a challenge.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

- The Headteacher has a clear vision of what a Catholic school should provide for the pupils and this is shared and fully supported by all stakeholders. She is highly respected and valued by pupils, staff, governors and parents alike. She has a high



profile around the school, cares deeply about the pupils and feels passionately that they are provided with the highest quality Catholic education.

- Governors provide a powerful blend of challenge and support to senior leaders. They are highly experienced, fully committed and fiercely loyal to the school. They fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are not afraid to take difficult decisions which are in the best interest of the pupils.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school for special events and Masses as well as visiting lessons. They have established an Ethos Committee, which evaluates and monitors the Catholic Life of the school. The Headteacher also reports termly to governors on the Catholic Life of the school. The self-evaluation carried out by school leaders and governors prior to the inspection was fully endorsed by inspectors in all key areas.
- Outstanding Leadership has ensured very high staff morale and all staff are fully committed to developing further the Catholic Life of the school.
- School leaders have recently undertaken a review of the mission statement in order to make it more accessible to all pupils. The mission statement is displayed prominently around the school and is fully understood by all at the school.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Overall, pupils make excellent progress in Religious Education. Pupils' ability on entry to the school is generally above average and during their time at Bishop Thomas Grant, they make very good progress. By the end of their time at the school, pupils have developed excellent subject knowledge of their faith and that of other faiths.
- Since the last inspection, results at GCSE and A Level have shown significant improvement. GCSE results in 2017 were well above the average for similar schools especially taking into account the school's policy of entering all pupils for GCSE Religious Studies. The percentage of pupils achieving higher grades was broadly similar to English and Maths. At post 16, results were even higher showing these pupils also made excellent progress although numbers studying A-level Religious Education are small.
- Pupils have benefitted from the development of a more challenging curriculum in Key Stage 3. The impact of this has been a significant improvement in Key Stage 3 results and pupils feel they are well prepared for the rigours of GCSE.
- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and benefit greatly from the range of teaching styles used by teachers, including debates, role play and paired working. They highly value their teachers with whom they develop excellent relationships based on trust and respect.
- The behaviour of the pupils in all lessons seen during the inspection was exemplary.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- The school judges the overall quality of teaching in Religious Education as being good and inspectors agreed with this judgement. Teaching seen during the inspection was of a consistently good standard and some was outstanding. However not enough outstanding teaching happens across the department to allow all pupils to make exceptional progress. In the best lessons seen, pupils were encouraged to express their views in an extended way and were challenged to think more deeply about the topics being covered.
- In an outstanding lesson seen during the inspection, the Year 11 class were discussing conscience. The pupils participated in a challenging debate in which they displayed mature knowledge and attitudes and felt secure in sharing their views with others, knowing they would be respected at all times. The teacher challenged the pupils' responses encouraging them to think more deeply about their own views.



- Pupils' books showed that work is regularly marked and that teachers provide written comments on how to further improve. Pupils know their target grades and have a clear understanding of the progress they are making. Teachers track progress through regular assessments and provide additional support where sufficient progress is not made.
- The pupils benefit from well-qualified, enthusiastic and hardworking Religious Education teachers who have excellent subject knowledge and are excellent role models. Classrooms are bright, well equipped and have high quality displays which enhance the learning environment. The department has excellent resources, many of which are produced by the subject leader.
- Teachers go above and beyond by offering booster classes and revision classes after school and during school holidays to support pupil progress and this too is valued by the pupils.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors know the strengths of the Religious Education department as well as what needs to be improved.
- The dedicated and highly experienced subject leader provides excellent leadership to the department. However, he also has significant whole school responsibilities, which often take him away from this key role. Inspectors recommend that school leaders review the staffing and allocation of responsibilities within the Religious Education department to further enhance the leadership of the department to reflect what happens in other core subjects in the school.
- Leaders have ensured that 10% of curriculum time in Key Stages 3 and 4, is allocated to Religious Education as required by guidelines issued by the Bishops' Conference. The post 16 provision of 5% general Religious Education is also met.
- At Key Stage 3, the 2-year course provides a challenging curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and provides an excellent foundation for Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 4, pupils follow the AQA specification B. Currently, Key Stage 4 is a three year course at the school for all subjects including Religious Education.
- General Religious Education in the Sixth form is taught through 5 drop down days when the normal timetable is suspended and pupils are able to focus on a theme for a day. These days are well planned and include visiting speakers who enhance the experience of the post 16 students. Topics include Euthanasia, HIV and Aids, Human Trafficking and Inter-Faith. The students spoke of how much they enjoy the days which challenged them to think deeply on complex and relevant subjects.
- The link governor for Religious Education is a regular visitor to the school and to Religious Education lessons. She feeds back to the Governing Body and Ethos



Committee and has an excellent understanding of the work of the department. The subject leader is also a member of the Governing Body. This arrangement ensures the governors are fully informed about provision.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding

- On the first day of the inspection, A Remembrance Mass was held for those who had died and were associated with the school. Although attendance was voluntary, there was a large turnout of pupils, staff and governors. Pupils were involved in readings and during the offertory. The behaviour of all the pupils was highly respectful and prayerful and they participated in the singing of hymns.
- Pupils spoke of how highly they value the Chapel Choir who lead the singing at whole school Masses and other celebrations.
- In a range of assemblies seen during the inspection, again the behaviour of all pupils was exemplary. Pupils were very willing to share their views and respond to questions. In an outstanding assembly seen during the inspection, the role of Chaplains during The Great War was highlighted as part of Remembrance Week. A range of powerful images were used to encourage reflection by the pupils on how Chaplains supported the soldiers whilst doing God's work.
- Each day starts with a prayer and Collective Worship whether in the form class, year assembly or upper/lower school assembly. Pupils are keen to lead prayers and to write their own prayers. They also respond enthusiastically when invited to pray for special intentions.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding

- Teachers ensure prayer is central to the life of the school. Prayers are usually said at the start of lessons and are often pupil initiated and led.
- Pupils have many opportunities to participate in a wide range of high quality Collective Worship. There is a wide variety of liturgical experiences available to pupils and they benefit from being able to plan and lead some of these.
- The Chaplain has worked hard to build strong relationships with local parishes and as a result, local clergy regularly visit to celebrate Mass regularly and to lead Services of Reconciliation. Masses are planned for Holy Days of Obligation, Feast Days and special occasions such as welcoming the Year 7s or saying goodbye to those who are leaving. Parents and carers are invited to attend.



How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors have ensured that prayer and Collective Worship have remained at the heart of the school. They have ensured pupils have many opportunities to participate in high quality Collective Worship.
- Pupils are encouraged to plan and deliver their own liturgical/prayer assemblies and are able to help plan form Masses and other liturgical celebrations.
- Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate provision on a regular basis through attendance at Masses, liturgies and assemblies on a regular basis.

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