



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 101036

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School
Nightingale Square
London
SW12 8QJ

Inspection date: 21 March 2014

Chair of Governors:	Dr Richard Bogle
Headteacher:	Miss Susan Lawless
Inspectors:	Mrs Ann Oddy Mrs Angela Rundle

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school. It is situated in the Wandsworth deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Wandsworth Local Authority. The school serves the parish of the Holy Ghost, Balham. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 100%. The average weekly proportion of 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 206. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is in line with and sometimes above national averages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 1.9%, which is below average. 22.5% of pupils have English as an additional language, but have good levels of fluency. 11.5% of pupils are registered as having special educational needs, including one pupil with a statement. 76% of pupils are White British, with 24% coming from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Publication date ... 28 April 2014

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
1

Holy Ghost school is an outstanding school with a clear Catholic identity. Pupils, staff, parents and governors form a strong community closely linked with the parish. The school provides an attractive, faith focused learning environment, with inspiring displays reflecting Religious Education and Catholic beliefs and practice. The school's welcoming atmosphere embraces all into its community; pupils, staff and governors are clearly proud of their school and happy to welcome visitors.

Pupil outcomes in Religious Education are outstanding, as are Leadership and Management and the Catholic Life of the school. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and is fully supported by a very well informed and committed Governing Body, as well as a cohesive and talented staff team. School self-evaluation is accurate, reflective and comprehensive. It effectively informs school development planning and maintains the school's focus on continued improvement.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the Catholic education it offers. One said, "The school is extremely good at filtering the Catholic ethos and beliefs through all areas of school life"; many others spoke appreciatively of the distinctively Catholic nature of the school. Holy Ghost school has an excellent relationship with parents, who feel welcomed and valued. It is committed to including and engaging with all parents, including those who are harder to reach: This is identified as an area for continued development.

Close links with the parish enhance the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education. The parish priest and chaplain are very much part of the school community and involved in many aspects of school life; their valuable and supportive role is both recognised and appreciated. All recommendations made by the previous Section 48 inspection have been fully addressed.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to develop initiatives to encourage all families to actively engage in the school community, as part of the school's Catholic mission of inclusion and welcome.

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

The school has a vibrant and all-pervading Catholic ethos. It provides many and varied opportunities for pupils to develop their faith and spirituality. Pupils value and respect others: They understand the importance of caring for each other and enjoy taking responsibility as part of their school life. The pupils are proud of their school and have a strong sense of the value of every individual. They express their own views and beliefs with confidence and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and other religious figures. Pupils spoke readily of the need to forgive others "as Jesus teaches us" and were very knowledgeable regarding their class saints, whom they clearly identified as examples for their own lives.

The parish and the school form a strong partnership, ably supported and fostered by the parish priest and the school chaplain. This significantly enhances the Catholic life of the school and is appreciated by parents, who particularly value the school's involvement in preparation for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Pupils are aware of the needs of others in the wider community. They support many charities; of particular note is the strong link with a school in Malawi, which includes two way communication between pupils at the two schools. The partnership between the schools benefits the Holy Ghost's children's understanding of 'the riches we can receive from those who are materially poor'.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in Religious Education. Progress is excellent, as shown by comprehensive assessment and tracking systems. These effectively inform teaching and learning, ensuring appropriate challenge.

Pupils with particular learning needs are supported to enable them to access the curriculum and achieve their full potential. Pupils recognise that they are all challenged and encouraged to achieve their best. They reported that, "teachers make lessons fun" and that learning in Religious Education included, "lots of different activities, such as art, drama and role play" which added to their enjoyment.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

The act of collective worship observed reflected the liturgical season of Lent and was led by pupils. Those taking part spoke confidently and with personal conviction. Exceptional solo singing by pupils added to the prayerful and reverent atmosphere. Powerful imagery using candle flames supported and enhanced the Lenten theme of repentance. All pupils responded well by joining in the prayers and singing. Pupils prepare a range of acts of worship on a regular basis. They are offered a variety of prayer opportunities and participate readily and with reverence.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Strong leadership at all levels contributes significantly to the success of the school. All are fully committed to providing an outstanding Catholic education for the pupils. Governors are impressively conversant with their role of support and challenge, monitoring all aspects of provision, outcomes and the Catholic life of the school conscientiously and with care. They contribute to rigorous school self-evaluation and are able to accurately identify priorities for school improvement. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent and is fostered from their earliest years at the school. The headteacher is an inspirational role model and a highly effective leader of Religious Education. Her enthusiasm and passion for the school are evident. As one parent said, "her genuine and transparent faith speaks volumes to children and parents alike."

Staff form a supportive and cohesive team and are actively involved in promoting the school's mission. A wide range of appropriate training enables all staff to give of their best and to feel part of the school community.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Accurate and rigorous self-evaluation is well established and reflects the school's relentless drive towards continuous improvement. It is characterised by honesty and transparency and uses contributions from the whole school community. Outstanding systems of assessment and monitoring result in well targeted planning and strategic action regarding outcomes and provision.

Outcomes in Religious Education considerably exceed age related expectations, indicating that provision is excellent and maximises the achievement of all pupils, regardless of ability. Provision and outcomes are regularly reported to, and discussed by, the Governing Body who also fulfil their monitoring role by regular visits and observations.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

Four lessons were observed: All were outstanding. Lessons were well prepared and showed good subject knowledge. They were closely related to pupils' own experience and personal faith. Lessons included a variety of activities and approaches, catering for different learning styles. Imaginative use of resources and excellent pace engaged and enthused pupils. Prayerful beginnings and opportunities for questioning, discussion and reflection were skilfully used to draw out pupils' thinking and make the lessons special experiences for them.

The school uses 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme of Religious Education, but teachers have the confidence to supplement this with other lessons as appropriate. Work in books reflects the high standard of teaching and learning. Pupils' work is beautifully presented and of high quality. Marking is regular, formative and demonstrates the dialogue between teacher and pupil. Assessment and target setting are evident and contribute to excellent pupil progress.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The Religious Education programme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' is extended and enhanced by a variety of other relevant Religious Education lessons and opportunities. It engages and interests the pupils, who are keen to describe their enjoyment of Religious Education and its importance in their own lives. As a result, lessons contribute to their knowledge and to their spiritual and moral development. Learning about other faiths is well established and an annual Inter Faith day helps to bring this to life for the pupils. Pupils are aware that consideration for others is an important part of school life and the school has recently achieved Level 1 of the Unicef 'Rights Respecting School' accreditation.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of school celebrations. Prayer is included in all aspects of school life and pupils have the opportunity to write and lead prayers. Pupils explore different types of prayer and know the traditional prayers of the Church as well as preparing their own prayers. Close links with the parish provide many opportunities for prayer and worship in the church as well as at school. Parents and pupils are also offered the opportunity to attend Mass before school on a weekly basis.