

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



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
URN 101036

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School
Nightingale Square
London SW12 8QJ

Chair of Governors Mrs Helen Todd
Headteacher Miss Susan Lawless
Inspectors Mrs Joan Lenahan
Mrs Penny Rickard

Inspection date 9 March 2009

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

Description of the school

The Holy Ghost school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Balham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Wandsworth LA. The school serves the parish of the Holy Ghost in the London Borough of Wandsworth. 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 takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 207. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals is 1.4% which is below average. Around 12.5% of the pupils have English as an additional language. 14.9% of pupils are registered with special educational needs and 1.9% have statements. 67% of pupils are white British with 32% coming from ethnic minority groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

The Holy Ghost is an outstanding school. The extremely strong Catholic identity is present in the school's daily life. The committed leadership from the headteacher, senior management team and governors is instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the Catholic ethos. Prayer and worship have a strong central role in the school's life. Relationships within the school are very good and reflect the school's mission. Parents speak highly of their school. They appreciate being part of a Christian community and the way leaders and teachers give generously of their time to support them. Those interviewed concurred that "it is the whole family who joins the school, not just the child". Spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and this is reflected in the pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are very proud of their school and fully embrace its motto; "A child helped by another child is like a strong city". Teaching is very good and assessment procedures are effectively implemented, consequently the standards achieved in religious education are very high. All staff work as a community to provide a stimulating environment and they are committed to the high profile given to religious education in the school.

Issues from the previous Section 23 inspection in 2006 have been fully addressed. Provision for the teaching of other faiths has been enhanced. Communication with parents has improved with regular newsletters which clearly outline the religious education programme. The school has made good progress with assessment procedures. Strategies are now in place to further enhance staff proficiency in assessing pupils' levels of attainment and the school has compiled a whole school portfolio of assessed work.

The school has an excellent capacity for improvement due to its accurate knowledge of its strengths and developmental needs. The school's self-evaluation process involves staff, governors, parents and pupils. Staff and governors show a strong commitment to the school's ethos. They are committed to the success of the school and to further develop their own skills through collaborative training. Effective processes are in place, which identify targets and action to be taken relating to the Catholic life of the school and the religious education curriculum. These are given priority in the annual school development plan. Governors give clear direction and support to the Catholicity of the school. Close links with the parish and a strong parent partnership reinforce the school's ability to fulfil its mission.

Grade 1

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Integrate the programmes for Education in Personal Relationships and Personal, Social and Health Education so that they are more explicitly Catholic.

Further develop the world faith teaching programme to make it broader and more systematic.

Further develop the curriculum for community cohesion to include a global dimension as identified in the development plan.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

Grade 1

The school is very well managed. The headteacher gives outstanding leadership to the Catholic life of the school and she is ably supported by the senior management team. The governing body is experienced, committed, well informed and, as regular visitors, they are actively involved in challenging and monitoring performance. The governors' annual 'Visioning Mission' training for all members of the school community ensures that all staff fully understand the school's mission and that it is implemented by fostering respectful relationships at all levels. High expectations are part of the school's ethos. Leaders provide outstanding systems for pupils' pastoral care and holistic education. Pupils embrace the code of behaviour and display respect for each other and adults. Consequently, a friendly and purposeful atmosphere permeates the school that is conducive to learning. Pupils' views are taken into consideration through the voice of 'The School Council'. Good relationships with parents are fostered through an 'open door' policy, meetings, newsletters, annual questionnaires and invitations to school events, assemblies and liturgies. The interface between school, home and parish is outstanding. A contributing factor is the success and commitment of the parish to the 'Faith in the Family' programme. Leaders have established a cohesive community spirit with the parish, parents, staff and pupils all making a significant contribution in helping one another on their faith journeys.

The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor. His active support enhances the Catholic life of the school.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

Grade 1

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school. There is a good range of varied opportunities for worship, including time for reflective meditation and these are woven into the daily life of the school. School provision for worship actively promotes spiritual and moral development. There is a strong moral code, explicit within the school and reinforced through exceptionally creative inter-active displays based on Gospel values. Acts of collective worship are linked to the liturgical year and the religious education programme. Year 6 pupils presented an excellent assembly based on the Commandments: Love God and Love your Neighbour. This was a very powerful act of worship which impacted on all in attendance because of the way the gospel message was conveyed through drama, scripture readings, two part harmony singing, prayer and reflection and the active involvement of the congregation. The response of pupils to worship and prayer is outstanding. They know many of the formal prayers of the Church, understand the significance of the Mass responses and write reflective intercessions. Pupils are able to compose spontaneous meaningful prayers, as seen when a Year 4 child led

the class prayer before lunch. Preparation for the First Eucharist is school based and supports the parish programme. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the sacramental life of the school.

Mass is an integral aspect of the prayer life of the school with opportunities for a Key Stage 2 class to join parishioners in church each week.

Whole school celebrations are marked by special Masses at significant times throughout the year and pupils are involved in their preparation. Prayer focal areas in every class are used effectively to inspire pupils to reflect and consolidate learning. An annual retreat day serves to enhance the pupils' spiritual development.

Community Cohesion

Grade 2

Community cohesion is embedded in the school's Catholic ethos. This vision is shared by the whole community. Leaders promote respect for difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Provision for prayer and collective worship is inclusive. Powerful analogies, using a weighing scales and membership cards, were used very effectively by pupils during an assembly to illustrate social harmony and membership of God's kingdom. The religious education curriculum contains some study of the major world faiths and the school has identified the need to broaden this programme and make it more systematic. Opportunities for pupils to become involved in the wider community are embedded in the curriculum with the school participating in sporting fixtures and musical events with local schools. Support for charities is exceptionally good. Activities such as supporting the 'Fred Foundation', Cafod's 'family fast day', 'Water aid', "pots of care" for the Marie Curie Foundation, carol singing at a local old peoples' home and a shoe box appeal for underprivileged children in Eastern Europe all serve to give pupils' an understanding of working for the greater good of mankind. Opportunities for pupils to engage with local Catholic senior schools are limited and this is regretted by the school as they view it as an integral aspect of fostering its Catholic dimension of community. To counteract this, the parish based Year 6/Year 7 'Bridging Club' club serves to give pupils an ongoing sense of community. Links with a local Islamic School are developing well, thereby, offering pupils opportunities to integrate with those of other faith backgrounds. The global dimension of the curriculum is less developed and the school has identified the need to extend its programme of study in this area.

Religious education

Achievement and standards

Grade 1

Across all key stages standards are higher than those expected for pupils' age and abilities. Pupils are gaining religious knowledge at a very good rate. Pupils' knowledge of the life of Jesus is excellent. They are able to express their understanding of the topics studied with confidence using appropriate religious terminology. The engagement and behaviour of learners is exemplary. They are attentive, focused and eager to participate in lessons. Pupils can relate to previous learning, as seen when Year 4 pupils made the connection of the sacrificial lamb to the story of Abraham in the Old Testament, the Passover feast and the significance of the Lamb of God in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Attainment is regularly monitored and the setting of individual targets in Key Stage 2 serves to ensure that all pupils make good progress.

Annual reports to parents are informative and identify what the pupils know about religious education and its application to their lives.

Pupils recorded work is of a very high standard and shows progression and continuity throughout the school.

Teaching and learning in Religious education

Grade 1

Teachers set high expectations so as to challenge and deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Overall, teaching is good with many outstanding aspects. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and planning is thorough. They use a wide range of teaching strategies which include role-play, quiz games, hot seating, and information technology to create a sense of discovery and joy in learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and make significant contributions to the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is systematic and effectively used to track performance in line with national guidelines. Developmental marking is consistent with school policy. Comments are helpful and pupils respond in most cases. This dialogue serves to enlighten pupils about how they can extend their learning. Excellent classroom displays encompass pupils' work and challenge understanding with open-ended questions.

The religious education curriculum

Grade 1

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is allocated for religious education following 'The Way, The Truth and The Life programme and linked to the liturgical year. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of religious commitment in their lives. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Aspects relating to education in personal relationships and citizenship are taught effectively as a discrete subject. However, there is a need to cross reference the programmes with religious education in line with Diocesan guidelines. The curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school, visits to centres of worship of other faith communities, a Passion play by the pupils, active participation in parish Masses and liturgies and attendance at 'Wintershall' to see re-enactments of 'The Nativity' and 'The Life of Christ'. Pupils are given opportunities to explore moral issues such as the 'anti-bullying' week and the obligations of being a good citizen. Retreat days for Year 5 and Year 6 are used to probe bigger questions, such as the difference between happiness found in material and transitory goods versus the true happiness found in life close to God. The parish priest as Vocations Director for the Diocese gives pupils an insight into vocation to the priesthood and religious life. High quality religious displays, such as the Lenten promises in the entrance hall and the pupils' art work depicting 'The Stations of the Cross' in the hall, give added value to this core subject.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

There is a clear vision for the development of religious education with a focus on the continuous quest for raising standards. Policies and procedures are clear and detailed. The headteacher, in her role as subject co-ordinator, gives outstanding leadership, support and guidance to the staff. The teaching and learning policy reflects the gospel values of 'respect, forgiveness, empathy, challenge and equal access to all' and is enacted with the vibrant delivery of religious education as a core subject. Priority is given to high quality professional development including regular in-house training and support. This ensures that teachers, including those new to teaching, are secure in delivering the curriculum. The monitoring system to measure performance is comprehensive and is used to inform development. The budget for religious education is in line with that allocated to other core subjects and resources are of a high quality, well organised and effectively used.