



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 101036

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School

Nightingale Square

London

SW12 8QJ

Inspection date: 19th November 2018

Chair of Governors: Dr Richard Bogle

Headteacher: Miss Susan Lawless

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Miss Frances Honis

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes

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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

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 all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 210. 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 below average at 0.95%, 37% of pupils have English as an additional language and this figure is on an upward trend although the majority have good levels of fluency. 11.5% of pupils are registered as having special educational needs, including two pupils with an EHCP. The school's most significant group are White British at 66%, with 20% white Western and Eastern European, 4% other meaning 24% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Holy Ghost is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The school is outstanding in its effectiveness in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The vision of the headteacher, school leadership team and governing body, supported by local clergy, are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are well planned and resourced.
- Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher, governors and senior staff share a strong vision of the Catholic nature of education and are fully committed to the Church's mission. They demonstrate this by providing a curriculum with spiritual and moral education at its heart. Catholic Life is central to the work of the school and leaders ensure that all aspects reflect the richness of a Christian way of life.
- The school's provision for prayer and worship is outstanding and a key part of every school celebration. Prayer and worship are central to the daily life of the school through class prayer times and assemblies. Pupils are often engaged in the



preparation and leadership of worship through choosing readings and writing their own prayers and this is an identified area of ongoing development.

- Pupils achievement, attainment and progress overall are outstanding in Religious Education. The school's own assessment systems are as robust and thorough as those for other core subjects. Both internal and external moderation are being used to ensure judgements are accurate and pupils are aware of the levels at which they are working. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who rise to the challenge. The excellent subject knowledge of teachers ensures pupils receive imaginative and stimulating lessons that lead to very good learning. Holy Ghost is a school which actively supports and draws upon the values of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Initiative and programme, strongly relating this to its core values as a Catholic school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

Whilst there are no significant areas for improvement, the school should continue to work on the areas for development highlighted in its own Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which the inspectors have been able to validate by:

- Further developing the capabilities and opportunities for pupils to prepare and lead acts of Collective Worship both at a class and school level with the active involvement of the school's Chaplaincy Team, which could in turn, be further developed as part of this process.
- Enhance and increase the use of the classroom focal points as a focus for prayer, for example, at the start of all Religious Education lessons.

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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.

1

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

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The strong Catholic ethos of the school is further promoted through the school's use of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Initiative and programme about which pupils enthused. The school could consider formalising a programme to secure current provision in regard to the teaching of other faiths.
- Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school with some pupils supporting younger pupils through a buddying system. Pupils play an important role in the evaluation of the school's Catholic Life and mission. The active school council were clear about their role and felt they had an impact on the life of the school. This view was articulated by pupils generally who were well able to explain the kind of school they want saying things like: "The school is a safe place where we like to learn", "A place to respect other people and be kind", "A place in which to show love and kindness to all as Jesus taught us".
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding both in and out of lessons. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. As a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school, both within school and the wider community. They certainly show love and respect to all. They are involved in liturgies both in the school and the parish. They are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. The pupils are very keen to raise funds to support those less well off than themselves. They support many charities including: CAFOD, The Passage and the Catholic Childrens' Society.
- Pupils demonstrate an understanding of 'your neighbour' in the wider sense through supporting a link school in Malawi which has seen fundraising to support the provision of clean sanitation at the link school. This link has been further strengthened through a teacher having worked at the link school and skype links.
- Teachers provide good role models for the pupils' charity efforts through explicit participation in supporting local charities through the well-established local 'Nightingale Walk'.
- Pupils and staff value the visits made to the school by the Parish Priest and the school Chaplain's weekly visits to talk to one of the classes and answer pupils' questions. Pupils respond well to the opportunities these visits provide to help them grow spiritually.



- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a growing understanding of loving relationships within the context of a Christian understanding with the RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) programme, which has the full support of families.
- There is a strong sense of inclusivity with pupils embracing a holistic approach to education, engendering an understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others, especially the less fortunate in their community and abroad.
- As a parent commented, *"I cannot fault the school in any way at all"*.

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

- Holy Ghost's mission statement is a strong expression of the educational mission of the Church. All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life.
- Holy Ghost is a warm, welcoming community seeking to include every child and his/her family, especially the "harder to reach" groups.
- The school's motto: "A child helped by another child is like a strong city" underpins the school's daily work and *modus operandum*.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care with the fostering of respect being at the heart of the school's approach to all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour policies are rooted in Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Holy Ghost is a school which is attentive to the needs of all members of its community evident in the excellent relationships which exist between staff, governors, parents and pupils. The school is a supportive and happy place to work and learn.
- The highest level of pastoral care is offered to pupils. The deployment of support staff is used to excellent effect for the benefit of all pupils whatever their level of need.
- Displays and prayerful spaces in school contribute to a stimulating learning environment which reflects the school's mission and Catholic character. The school could now enhance and increase the use of the classroom focal points as a focus for prayer, for example at the start of all Religious Education lessons.
- Parents are welcome visitors to the school and are enthusiastically supportive of all the school does to provide for its Catholic Life.
- There is a strong community feel about the school with parish links being extremely strong. This is supported by the Parish Priest who meets and greets at the school gate and the Assistant Priest.
- The school operates on a restricted site in an old building and utilises space well. Consideration could be given, however, to better evidence the Catholic nature of the school by giving it greater prominence at the entrance to the school.



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

- The school is extremely well led by a Headteacher who is passionate about Catholic education in the broadest sense. She engages with the whole school community providing strong leadership whilst facilitating the development of others' strengths, providing a role model for excellent leadership.
- The school's leadership is committed to the mission of the Catholic Church in education. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide heartfelt inspiration to the whole school community through their passion to make the Catholic Life of the school the best it can possibly be.
- Leaders at all levels in school, including the governing body, have very high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. The development and sustenance of an authentic Catholic ethos is viewed as a core leadership responsibility.
- Governors are role models of service; they are proud to be associated with Holy Ghost.
- The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge, which the inspectors were able to validate. It would benefit from being updated in line with the current inspection framework to make it a more useful working document to provide greater clarity in regard to the targets set, through ongoing review and by providing clear timescales and lines of accountability to facilitate the monitoring of progress.
- The very effective work of the governing body is evident in their understanding of the detailed evaluation and monitoring of Catholic Life across the school.
- Governors reflect upon their strategic duties of ensuring that the Catholic Life of the school is a strength and is celebrated. The knowledgeable and effective governor for Religious Education, through the governors' monitoring group, monitors the progress of the annual action plan. He meets with the subject leader and headteacher and joins them for the commissioning of the Year 6 school chaplains. There are also meetings with the Religious Education leader and link governor to provide a greater insight into the teaching and learning of Religious Education.
- The school engages very well with parents and carers who describe how well the school promotes the Catholic Life of the school through varied and effective lines of communication. They say that they feel well informed and part of the mission to make the school the very best it can be for all children. This substantiates the school's view that it addressed the action point raised at the time of its last inspection.
- A parent wrote, *"Holy Ghost provides a wonderful nurturing environment with the Catholic values at the heart of their learning"*.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- Pupils' achievements and enjoyment in Religious Education are outstanding. In general, their attainment in Religious Education is high. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender, with outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs being similar to their peers. They are enabled to participate fully in lessons to achieve their potential. They respond very well to suitably differentiated tasks provided and to the effective support from additional adults in the classroom.
- Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils attaining at least an appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage and many exceed this expectation.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing according to their age or capacity. They are utilising the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding, as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour in lessons. On the day of inspection, pupils diligently remained on task showing sustained levels of concentration as they excitedly went about their work. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Throughout their group work, they co-operate extremely well and treat each other kindly. In paired/shared discussions, they willingly consider and respect the views and opinions of others.
- They are anxious to learn, improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they become independent learners. Generally, pupils are highly motivated, enjoy a challenge and apply their learning well.
- Pupils have high levels of religious vocabulary as a result of targeted questioning, the use of religious word books and teacher encouragement.
- Pupils benefit from strong lesson planning and consistency of approaches across the school and strong growing cross curricular links with excellent use being made of scripture pupils knowledge of which is a strength of the school.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding. On the day of inspection, the majority of lessons observed were outstanding.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence because of their subject expertise and understanding of the benefits of using a breadth of teaching methods. As a consequence, pupils are inspired to learn and make rapid and sustained progress.
- Teachers are effective in planning high-quality lessons which will continue to impact on pupils' progress when planning is even more closely linked to tracking data.



- The school's records of lesson observations indicate that 100% of lessons are good or better in Religious Education with the following strengths being noted, good standards in books; creative approaches with an increasing focus on greater depth during lesson input/questioning and children's tasks. These were likewise identified by the inspectors.
- Religious Education lessons are based on the school's choice of 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme which is utilised and supplemented to ensure they are challenging and invigorating. Bloom's Taxonomy is used in Religious Education as a means of ensuring challenge, enrichment and extension for learners. As with the national curriculum for other subjects the quest for mastery – nothing less than good progress – is the baseline for Religious Education also.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and passionate in their delivery and linked scripture to their own and the lives of the pupils. They have high expectations and pupils respond enthusiastically.
- Lessons are well planned and in many cases creative. They are marked with an emphasis on challenge for all pupils. Opportunities could now be developed to offer more opportunities for pupil directed learning. Teachers employ a range of strategies such as art work, role play and information technology built on strong differentiation to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Very good questioning which is open ended and leads pupils to a deeper level of understanding is effectively employed, for example, "Why did Jesus need to come to earth?" "Did Adam and Eve use their freedom properly?"
- On the day of inspection all teaching showed an enthusiasm for Religious Education. Good use was made of challenging plenaries and driver words in questioning and reflecting on learning.
- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teacher's assessment strategy. Within lessons teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to their progress and provides them with a high level of confidence in making further improvements.
- The school's assessment processes are rigorous and inform planning. Half termly assessments are monitored closely and attainment is tracked and analysed. When additional learning needs are identified by the teacher, they are provided through additional teaching assistant input and differentiated tasks. Commendably practical Religious Education work is put in place for children who join the school late or those children who have low prior attainment and are less familiar with the Catholic faith.
- Teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- High quality resources for groups of pupils and interactive whiteboards were used very effectively on the day of inspection and optimised learning for each pupil. Religious artefacts are well used, for example Year 2 pupils discussed and ranked a variety of paintings of a religious scene.



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

- Self-evaluation of Religious Education is a reflection of frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge.
- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each Key Stage and ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Religious Education has an exceptional Religious Education lead who is both well qualified and enthusiastic about her role. She has worked well in keeping staff informed of developments in Religious Education. She has a clear vision for Religious Education and is keen to keep the subject moving forward, maintaining it as a truly core subject in the school. She is part of a cluster of local Catholic schools who meet regularly to discuss and support leading Religious Education and share practice.
- Parents receive regular updates about Religious Education through information on the school's website and a dedicated Religious Education section on class newsletters each half term. The website could be more actively used to celebrate the extensive religious life of the school.
- The Religious Education governor meets with the subject leader, is fully informed of the standards across the school and supports monitoring. He is also an active parish member who provides great links for the school.
- Leaders and governors can continue to develop their outstanding practices by imaginatively and thoughtfully planning developments in Religious Education to meet the ongoing needs of different groups of pupils and by creatively structuring each key stage to maintain, enhance and further pupil progress.



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Pupils response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- They are involved in a variety of approaches to prayer, which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary. Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.
- Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are also confident in contributing their own prayers as part of Collective Worship. They demonstrate a good understanding of spontaneous prayer, which one pupil described as "A prayer from the heart". They are beginning to become more actively involved in preparing and participating in the school's Collective Worship and this is an area the school has identified for development. They should also be encouraged to be part of the monitoring and evaluation of this.
- They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and celebrations are linked to its feasts and seasons. For example, opportunities to pray the Rosary and Stations of the Cross are offered in appropriate seasons.
- There is a good buddying system that sees Year 6 pupils supporting Reception pupils when attending Mass.
- In conversations with older pupils on the day of inspection, pupils were enthused by their worship. A whole school assembly was observed as part of this inspection. It offered opportunities for reflection and a message relevant to pupils' lives.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background.
- Holy Ghost is an inclusive prayerful community with a deep respect for one another. The school is keen to continue developing pupils' participation in worship and are looking to introduce further creative opportunities for prayer.

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

- Prayer and acts of Collective Worship are given the highest priority and have become a key part of every day and every school celebration, providing inspiration for staff and pupils.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and a good range of structures to ensure that it is frequent and inclusive and there are a variety of opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together.
- Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced to enhance the worship experiences throughout the liturgical year. Pupils and adults praying together is a



daily experience with parents and other adults welcomed into this prayerful community.

- Adults are passionate about ensuring that Collective Worship is of the highest quality and take every opportunity to model high quality liturgies: themes chosen reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical year.
- Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to share in various acts of Collective Worship which are timetabled throughout the year.

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

- Governors have a visible presence in the school, through their regular attendance at assemblies, prayer services and celebrations. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's provision of Collective Worship and how pupils respond to it.
- They also receive progress reports about Collective Worship initiatives in the termly headteacher's report to governors.
- Parents concurred that Collective Worship at Holy Ghost is very strong. They said they felt welcome to attend Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors are good at promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship. Themes are shared to give worship a suitable direction. They have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are very good models of practice for members of staff and pupils. They offer support to those less experienced or less confident teachers.

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