



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

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

**URN 137856**

**St Agatha's Catholic Primary School**

**St Agatha's Drive**

**Kingston upon Thames**

**KT2 5TY**

**Inspection date: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

**Chair of Governors: Mr Colin Rand**

**Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Cahill**

**Inspectors: Mrs Ann Oddy**

**Miss Anita McWeeney**

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331

**Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes**



### Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Agatha's Catholic Primary School is an academy converter school. It is situated in the Kingston Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is within the Kingston upon Thames Local Authority area. The principal parish which the school serves is St Agatha's, Kingston, with some pupils coming from the parishes of St Anne's, Kingston Hill and St Thomas Aquinas, Ham. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 80%.

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 3 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll, excluding the nursery, is 386. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally at, or above, average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is 6%, which is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom Pupil Premium funding is received is 9%, which is also well below the national average. The school has a lower than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language (EAL) is 33%. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Agatha's Catholic Primary is an outstanding school because:

- The school offers a high standard of Catholic education in a welcoming and inclusive Catholic community. The school's strong Catholic ethos pervades all aspects of school life. Senior leaders and governors show dedication and commitment to their roles and are supported by a cohesive staff team who share their vision of excellence in Catholic education. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and happy. Their behaviour is exemplary. The school is highly regarded by parents, who recognise and appreciate the quality of Catholic education it offers.
- The school has a rich and varied Catholic life which supports pupils' academic, moral and spiritual development. Strong links with the parish enrich the school's liturgical year, its feasts and seasons. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others, in their own community and beyond. They are active in fundraising for those in need. Governors, school leaders and staff are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and personal development of every pupil. Pastoral care is excellent.
- Standards in Religious Education are high. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education and appreciate its message to their own lives. Prayer and music create a special atmosphere and pupils respond very positively.
- The school offers a wide range of prayer and worship opportunities to nurture pupils' spiritual growth and their knowledge of the celebrations and traditions of the Church. Pupils participate with reverence and respect, knowing that these are special times and form part of their relationship with God. They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are at ease composing and contributing their own prayers.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the formal monitoring of collective worship and use this to inform the school self-evaluation and development planning.
- Continue to develop the role of pupils in preparing and leading worship.
- Establish consistent and effective systems of developmental marking in Religious Education, creating a dialogue between teacher and pupils and ensuring that pupils respond to teachers' written feedback in order to further explore their learning and deepen understanding.



## 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

2

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

2

## CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to their school community and know they have a responsibility towards contributing to its mission and ethos. They value and actively participate in its Catholic life and contribute to self-evaluation and planned improvements. An example is the Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) team, who plan and carry out initiatives related to Religious Education and the school's Catholic life.
- Pupils know the importance of respect for themselves and others. A pupil said, 'We are all God's children and we should love each other as He loves us.' During this inspection, pupil behaviour was exemplary, in the classroom and around the school. Pupils are courteous and kind to one another. They know the importance of forgiveness and can relate this to the teachings of Jesus. They listen to the views of others and are quick to praise and congratulate their peers. A pupil said, 'This school is a family. We all care for each other and help each other out'.
- The school's Catholic life includes many activities to benefit those in need, with a wide range of fundraising initiatives. Pupils are enthusiastic and actively involved, on an individual and small group basis, as well as in whole school activities. They have a strong sense of social justice and are pleased to contribute in this way.
- The school values, Respectful, Responsibility, Resourceful, Reflective, Relationships and Resilience, encourage pupils to consider these in every aspect of school life and in their personal development. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and a programme of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) help them to understand loving relationships and sexual development within a Christian context. Parental surveys indicate that 100% of parents felt the school values had a positive effect on their children.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the school's Catholic life. Buddies, Play Leaders, Librarians and Travel Ambassadors involve pupils in helping to make their school a harmonious community and pupils are proud to serve their school in this way. The GIFT team, Religious Education leaders and the school council contribute to pupil voice to organise events and suggest improvements. As a result, pupils are actively involved, know they will be listened to and are able to play their part in the school's Catholic life. A parent wrote, 'The ethos of teaching children what they can do for others is seen not only in events and activities with external charities but also in how the older children help and relate to the younger children'.
- St Agatha's has a strong Catholic tradition which pupils value and respect. They speak appreciatively of the celebrations of the feasts and seasons of the Church year. Strong



links with the parish and the deanery foster a sense of being part of a wider Catholic family.

- Parents appreciate the school's strong Catholic ethos and how it supports their children's academic, moral and spiritual development. One commented, 'The school's Catholic ethos is reflected also in the very good behaviour we as parents see in assemblies and in the good comments they receive on school trips'. Values such as empathy, generosity, kindness, respect, mercy and forgiveness are high on the school agenda and also at the top of their minds for my children.

**The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- The mission statement reflects the educational mission of the Church. It is central to school life and informs all policies and practice. It is regularly revisited and reviewed by the school community; most recently in June 2019. It is linked to the school values and the curriculum. Pupils interviewed as part of this inspection explained how the mission statement is discussed in assembly and all knew the school motto, 'Learning together in God's love.'
- Staff are committed to the Catholic life of the school. They promote and implement the mission statement throughout the curriculum, participate in staff prayer and pupil retreats and take part in professional development opportunities related to the school's Catholic life. There is a strong sense of community at all levels.
- Catholic social teaching, including social justice, the needs of others and care for the Earth, our common home, is woven into the curriculum, contributing to pupils' moral and social development. Pupils interviewed had a clear sense of personal responsibility and the importance of this to our world. This was exemplified by a Key Stage 2 pupil who had approached the Headteacher regarding making St Agatha's a plastic free environment. Her request was being seriously considered and had already had an impact on the Headteachers own practice.
- Displays, religious artefacts and prayer focus areas enrich the learning environment and reflect the school's Catholic identity.
- The school is an inclusive community in which all pupils are enabled to flourish and achieve. Enrichment activities are provided as appropriate and pupils with special educational needs are supported and encouraged. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy. They know that teachers listen to them and will always help them. As a result, they are keen to do their best and achieve well. Academic results are high. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 are above local and national averages.
- Parents feel part of the school community and enjoy being part of its Catholic life. Examples include attendance at parent forums, parents coffee mornings, prayer services and school Masses. Workshops, family learning and multi-agency work encourage the partnership between school and families.



- Strong links with the parish enhance provision for the school's Catholic life. The parish priest welcomes families back to school after the holidays and provides support for a wealth of liturgical celebrations, class prayer services, talks to year groups and visits to the church. Although relatively new to the school, he has forged excellent links with the school community and responded to suggestions, such as providing opportunities for Reconciliation within the school. Parents recognise and value the links between school and parish. A parent wrote, 'The school has strong links with St Agatha's parish, with whole school Masses and year Masses throughout the year, where the behaviour of the children is exemplary'.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school, supporting all members of the school community. Good relationships are evident, with pupils and staff respecting and caring for each other. Parents spoke appreciatively of the support the school offers families. Staff surveys indicated that 100% of staff are happy and proud to work at the school.
- In addition to support in school, leaders signpost families to other agencies as appropriate. The school is also committed to the 'Achievement for All' programme in which staff are trained on 'structured conversations' to enable engagement with hard to reach families and meet the needs of pupils vulnerable to underachievement. An Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) provides support for pupils as appropriate. A sensory room provides a calming and therapeutic environment for pupils to access as needed during the school day.
- PSHE and RSE programmes are carefully planned to foster pupils' wellbeing and knowledge of Catholic social teaching. RSE takes place throughout the school, with the 'All that I am' programme used in Years 5 and 6. Provision is in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Parental questionnaires distributed as part of this inspection showed a high rate of return and were all overwhelmingly appreciative of all that the school offers. A parent wrote, 'The school and teachers are amazing. The Catholic education at St Agatha's supports my children every day.' Another commented, 'A wonderful example of Gospel values in practice'.

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

- School leaders and governors are committed to the Church's mission in education and to ensuring that St Agatha's school reflects this in all aspects of its provision. Leaders are excellent role models and have created a staff team with a strong sense of Christian community. Governors fulfil their role of support and challenge and work closely with parents and the church community.





- Provision includes a programme of professional development training for staff at deanery, diocesan and school level. This provides new ideas, resources and up to date knowledge to enthuse and motivate staff and provide inspiration for the whole school community. Governors have taken part in deanery training sessions, sharing good practice and strengthening links with other Catholic schools.
- The parish priest and the link governor for Religious Education visit the school regularly, meet with the Religious Education subject leader, contribute to self-evaluation and help to identify areas for development.
- School self-evaluation is comprehensive and evidence-based, indicating effective systems of monitoring and analysis. Views from a wide range of stakeholders contribute to this, with data from parent surveys, staff surveys and pupil voice providing evidence to substantiate judgements. Self-evaluation informs development planning. The Religious Education action plan features planned objectives, with appropriate timescales and lines of responsibility. It would benefit from including measurable success criteria.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents, including providing support for those who need it. A range of communication includes newsletters, the school website, Religious Education topic information, Parent Forum and a Parents Association. Parents feel the school is welcoming and approachable; this was evident in parents interviewed as part of this inspection and in parental questionnaires. Parents are active in fundraising for the school and have made a significant and valued contribution towards the funding of school initiatives.

Publication Date 15th October 2019



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- Standards of progress and attainment in Religious Education are high. End of key stage results indicate that the great majority of pupils meet or exceed age related expectations, with a significant proportion of pupils working at greater depth. All groups of pupils make good progress, reflecting the school's accurate provision of support and challenge.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and appreciate the importance of Religious Education to their own lives. Lessons observed as part of this inspection encouraged pupils to make links between their lessons and life in school and beyond. Pupils are interested and thoughtful learners. They are attentive and respond very well to teachers' questioning. Pupil behaviour in lessons is excellent.
- School monitoring indicates that pupils enjoy Religious Education and are motivated to do their best; this is supported by evidence gathered from pupils and lesson observations as part of this inspection. Pupils are keen to improve their work, responding positively to teacher feedback.
- Lessons observed and pupils' work indicate that pupils have a wide range of religious vocabulary and use this appropriately in written and oral work. Pupils show excellent knowledge and understanding and build on prior learning. They enjoy cross curricular links such as IT, Drama and Art. An example was the use of an artwork by Elizabeth Wong to inspire pupils' own work.
- Work in pupils' books is of a good standard in both presentation and content. As the inspection was early in the academic year a sample of the previous year's books confirmed curriculum coverage and pupils' work throughout the year.
- Parents value the Religious Education offered by the school. A parent wrote, 'I have been especially pleased at parents' evening when I look through my daughters' Religious Education books. They are lovely, with thoughtful reflections'.

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- School monitoring indicates that teaching is consistently good or outstanding and this is supported by the findings of this inspection.
- Four lessons, across three key stages, were observed as part of this inspection. A learning walk, including drop-ins to other classes, contributed to the picture of Religious Education teaching and learning across the school. Creation of a special atmosphere, using candles and music, marked the distinctive nature of the lesson. Lessons showed careful preparation and provision for pupils' needs as appropriate. A



range of teaching strategies and styles engaged and motivated learners. Lessons built on previous learning used questioning effectively. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and had high expectations of their pupils, who responded positively. In all lessons observed, the excellent relationship between teachers and their pupils was evident.

- Pupils discuss and share their ideas and use role play, talk partners and individual and collaborative work to present their responses.
- Teacher feedback takes place orally and through marking, establishing a dialogue between teacher and pupil to maximise and deepen learning. The school has identified this as an area for further development, particularly with regard to consistency across the school and this is in line with the recommendations of this inspection. School leaders should ensure that this is consistent across all classes and that pupils are given time and are expected to respond to teachers' written questions.
- 'Big Questions' enable pupils to reflect on and explore more challenging ideas in Religious Education. Samples of outstanding pupil responses are featured in the Big Books which are excellent examples of highly effective practice.
- Assessment takes place during the school year. Moderation takes place at school and deanery level to validate teachers' judgments.
- Pupils are beginning to evaluate their own work and school leaders plan to develop this further.

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

- Leaders choose to support the Religious Education curriculum with 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' programme, enriched by cross curricular links as appropriate. Curriculum time allocation is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. This had been an area for development recommended by the last inspection and has now been addressed. The study of other faiths is well established and is evident in pupils' books.
- Religious Education is well resourced and there is good provision for professional development training. Although it receives a smaller budget share compared with other core subjects, this is supplemented by other sources of funding.
- Religious Education is well led and managed by the subject leader who is supported by senior leaders. Together with the link governor, they share a vision of excellence in Catholic education and work in partnership to achieve this. The subject leader has established a whole school professional development programme to support staff. She works closely with the link governor to monitor and evaluate provision in Religious Education. This feeds into school self-evaluation and informs development. Evidence



includes link governor reports, with reference to action taken. The subject leader attends deanery and diocesan meetings, conferences and training to ensure current best practice which is cascaded back to school staff.

- Leaders and governors are fully committed to continued improvement in Religious Education. Monitoring includes regular learning walks. Data from monitoring is analysed and discussed, contributing to the Religious Education action plan, which is monitored by the link governor. Improvement objectives are also reflected in the School Development plan, which is regularly reviewed by governors.
- Well targeted planning and strategic action has ensured high quality provision and standards in Religious Education. This has resulted in high standards of pupil outcomes across the school.

Publication Date 15th October 2019

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Pupils understand that collective worship is central to the life of their school and is an opportunity for the school community to come together in worship. Most pupils welcome the opportunity to participate and all are reverent and respectful, knowing that these are special times.
- Pupils know that prayer and worship can take many forms. They are able to use moments of silence for prayer and reflection and also enjoy joining in group prayer and contributing their own prayers.
- In the whole school assembly observed as part of this inspection, pupils were reverent and respectful. They listened attentively and used prayerful silence to reflect on the theme of the assembly and its message to their own lives. Although a group of pupils read prayers they had written, pupil participation was limited.
- Opportunities for voluntary prayer include the Rosary Club. Pupils also write prayers which are placed in prayer boxes in the classroom and used for class prayer.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, feasts and seasons. They are able to describe how these are celebrated in school and why they are important.
- School leaders are developing pupils' skills in leading and preparing worship. Older pupils were encouraged to plan and lead worship during the past academic year and have subsequently been training other pupils in Key Stage 2. Continuing with this has been identified as an area for development and this is in line with the recommendations of this inspection.
- Pupil-led class worship was observed as part of this inspection. It was led confidently by a small group of pupils, who presented a dramatized version of the parable of the Prodigal Son and invited pupil responses. Pupils were attentive and responded with interest.
- Faith leaders are responsible for classroom prayer focus areas and contribute to those in communal areas. Pupils have led collective whole school and key stage worship and show enthusiasm for developing this role. The school is now well placed to further develop the role of pupils in leading worship.
- Pupils have an understanding of the importance of respecting the beliefs and practices of other faiths and Christian denominations and appreciate that all should be welcome



in school collective worship. All pupils and their families are welcomed into this inclusive community.

- Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their lives. They know that their prayers can help them and others who need their prayers. They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and enjoy composing their own prayers. Prayer is an integral part of the school day and pupils know it is essential to their school community. A pupil said, 'Prayer helps you if you're finding things hard. You can always talk to God'.

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

- A wealth of assemblies, liturgies and Masses bring the school together as a worshipping community. This fosters pupils' understanding of Catholic traditions and embraces the wider community of families and the parish as well as nurturing their spiritual development. Excellent provision ensures that links are made not only with the liturgical year, Religious Education and school events, but also with developments in the Church and the wider community. An example was the assembly observed which featured Pope Francis' letter, 'Laudato Si'.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school and essential to school celebrations for all pupils. It is welcoming and inclusive of all, regardless of faith background. Families are welcome to join the school at Masses and liturgies and many are happy to take up this invitation.
- Collective worship is well planned, with provision for a range of opportunities across the year. These are publicised in newsletters and the school website so that members of the wider school community can attend.
- Good resources and careful planning enrich the spiritual experience for all present. Visiting speakers bring personal experiences of the wider community to interest and inspire pupils.
- Senior leaders model provision. Staff are supported by the subject leader to develop their confidence and skills. Pupils are increasingly involved in planning and leading worship.
- Parents appreciate the positive effect school collective worship has on the spiritual and moral development of their children and commented on this in parental surveys.

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

- School leaders and governors consider high quality provision of collective worship to be a key priority for the school.



- Governors attend school Masses, liturgies and celebrations. Observation and evaluation also form part of the link governor's role.
- The views of parents are actively sought and form part of school self-evaluation. Parental questionnaires provide evidence of a positive response to school collective worship.
- Professional development and support are provided for staff so that they are confident to lead collective worship.
- School leaders ensure that collective worship is planned to make it relevant, meaningful and accessible to pupils.
- School leaders should now include collective worship in their planned schedule of formal monitoring and use evidence from this to identify and address areas for development.

Publication Date 15th October 2019