



DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP INSPECTION REPORT

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

URN 141482

St Philomena's Catholic Primary School
Chelsfield Road
Orpington
BR5 4DR

Inspection date: 16 September 2015

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Chair of Governors: | Mr Philip O'Halloran |
| Headteacher: | Ms Veronica Maher |
| Inspectors: | Mrs Ann Oddy |
| | Mrs Angela Pitcher |

EDUCATION COMMISSION

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR
Tel 01689 829331 Fax 01689 829255
Director of Education: Dr Anne Bamford

DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Introduction

Description of the school

St Philomena's is an academy within the recently formed Bromley Primary Catholic Schools Umbrella Trust. It is situated in the Bromley Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish which the school serves is Our Lady of the Crays. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 96%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum 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 213. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is slightly below average. 16% of pupils receive pupil premium funding; this is below the national average. 16% of pupils have special educational needs, including one pupil with an Education Health Care (EHC) plan. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. 42% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, principally Black African or Other White backgrounds. 26% of pupils do not have English as a first language.

Date of previous inspection:

10/11/2010

Overall Grade:

1

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding
Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Requires improvement
Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

St Philomena's is a good school with many outstanding features including a vibrant Catholic life and excellent relationships between staff and pupils. It is a welcoming and inclusive school with a strong Catholic ethos. It provides an attractive and happy learning environment where all feel valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

The Catholic life of the school is reflected in all aspects of school life. Attractive Religious Education displays and well-resourced prayer focus areas are a feature of the classrooms and shared areas. Prayer and worship are central to school life, with many opportunities to celebrate as a worshipping community. The school has well established links with the local parish. The Parish Priest is a welcome and frequent visitor to the school, providing pastoral support and enriching the teaching of Religious Education. The school mission statement is at the heart of the school and forms the basis for the school prayer. Standards of teaching and learning in Religious Education are very good and ensure that pupils make progress and achieve well. Systems of assessment and pupil tracking are in place. These should now be extended to include more feedback to pupils and the development of 'next steps' developmental assessment.

Leaders and managers are committed to school improvement and the school's Catholic life. Governors are well informed and fulfil their role of support and challenge. They are fully involved in the life of the school. Parents are appreciative of the caring nature of the school and of the Catholic education it offers. One wrote, "I can't wait for my younger children to attend this fantastic school." Pupils are happy to come to school and describe the school community as 'a family'. They are polite, well behaved and eager to tell visitors about their school.

Areas for improvement identified by the last inspection have been addressed.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Extend the current systems of assessment to involve pupils in peer and self-assessment.
- Ensure that marking is more developmental, establishing a dialogue between pupils and teachers in order to deepen the pupils' understanding in Religious Education including indicating clear next steps.

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

The school has a clear Catholic identity evident in the attractive displays and artefacts around the school. Prayer focus areas include pupils' prayers and work and feature the patron saint of each class.

The school nurtures pupils on their faith journey, working in partnership with parents and local parishes. Pupils are helped to deepen their religious understanding and develop their spirituality through the many opportunities and experiences offered throughout the school year. These include a rich variety of celebration Masses and liturgies as well as opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection.

Pupils are encouraged to be part of the planning and preparation for these activities and enjoy both the planning and taking part. Working with other schools within the Umbrella Trust has enabled them to join with the wider community of Catholic schools.

Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility and are proud to serve their school in this way.

Pupils are caring and supportive of each other and enjoy being members of their school community. They express their own views and beliefs with confidence and are able to refer to the teaching of Jesus and Gospel values. They understand the need for forgiveness and the importance of helping others. The school contributes to a range of charities with fundraising often suggested by the pupils themselves.

Diversity is celebrated by the popular and successful multicultural evenings and pupils clearly understand the importance of respecting the beliefs and cultures of others.

During this inspection, pupil behaviour was excellent, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils were courteous and willing to help. They spoke confidently and proudly of their school and clearly enjoyed being part of this happy community.

Parents appreciate the caring and inclusive nature of the school. One wrote, 'My three children have all thrived in the school, especially my child with special needs'. She attributed this to the 'nurturing environment from staff, pupils and other parents'.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils achieve high standards in Religious Education and make good progress during their time at the school. Although standards on entry are not high, by the end of Key Stage 2 a significant proportion of pupils attain the higher levels. The school should now work towards similar standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1. Most groups of pupils achieve well; pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately to enable them to reach their full potential. Excellent provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) to play a full part in every Religious Education lesson and to foster their language skills. An example of this was the signing to support singing of the Creation song in the Reception class. In addition, teacher planning for all lessons observed included specific provision for EAL pupils. Clear differentiation within lesson

planning offers appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils. During the lessons observed, pupils were engaged and interested and keen to do well. They were proud of their work and happy to talk about their learning.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils appreciate that prayer and worship is central to the life of their school. In the act of Collective Worship observed, they participated with reverence and respect, recognising it as an important event in their school year and for their school community. Pupils are involved in planning and preparing Collective Worship as well as participating in the celebration. In whole school Masses, each year group is responsible for different contributions, fostering a whole school sense of community.

Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and are also confident in contributing their own prayers. They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and celebrations are linked to its feasts and seasons. Examples include the annual Passion Play enacted by Year 5 pupils, the Carol Service held in Our Lady of the Crays Church and the Ash Wednesday liturgy.

Pupils celebrate the feast days of their class saints with Mass and speak appreciatively of these occasions.

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

Leaders, governors and managers are strongly committed to the Church's mission in education and to the school as a Catholic community. The Headteacher and the Religious Education Coordinator work closely together to plan and develop the Catholic life of the school. Governors regularly attend events in the school's Catholic life and appreciate that this forms part of their monitoring role as well as being members of the school community. School development planning includes provision for the Catholic life of the school. The plan is also considered and discussed by the Governing Body on a regular basis. A programme of governor visits is well established and forms part of their monitoring role. These visits and subsequent discussions should now be extended to include evaluation of the impact of strategies currently in place.

The Religious Education coordinator provides support and guidance for all staff, particularly those who are not Catholic or who are new to the school, to enable them to participate fully in the school's Catholic life.

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

The Headteacher and the Religious Education Coordinator have an effective programme of monitoring Religious Education provision.

This includes lesson observations, planning and book scrutinies. Provision, progress and outcomes in Religious Education are reported to governors on a regular basis. This informs governor discussion and strategic planning.

The Religious Education Coordinator is very committed to her role and is ably supported by the Headteacher in the drive to enhance the provision for Religious Education by the use of innovative and creative strategies. An example is the provision of an exciting range of resources and activities for Religious Education week; these enthused and engaged pupils and staff.

Systems for monitoring and tracking in Religious Education are established, enabling the school to monitor the progress of pupils. This should now be used more widely to address the performance of individuals and vulnerable groups and ensure consistent progress throughout the school in all Key Stages.

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

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good and enables pupils to make good progress.

Four lessons across three key stages were observed as part of this inspection. All were securely good, with some lessons demonstrating outstanding features. This is in line with the school's own monitoring. Lessons built on pupils' previous learning, consolidating this and extending knowledge and understanding.

Planning was thorough and comprehensive, with clear lesson objectives and success criteria. Differentiation and carefully chosen resources enabled all pupils to participate and make progress. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge. Pupils responded well to questioning although greater use of open ended questioning would encourage them to explore concepts more deeply.

Lessons were well structured, had good pace and made effective use of opportunities for reflection. Pupils with special educational needs were supported sensitively and unobtrusively.

Activities were chosen to interest and engage pupils and used cross curricular links to good effect. The use of word banks and key words fostered the growth of religious literacy. Pupils responded to questioning with confidence. A Year 2 pupil was asked to give an example of an occasion to illustrate 'How do we feel when we are chosen?' and answered, "I am happy that I have been chosen to come to this school." A Year 6 pupil confidently described a parable as, "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning."

Work in books is of a high standard, both in presentation and content. Older pupils were proud of their Prayer Journals, which formed part of their Religious Education work.

Marking was regular, thorough and largely affirmative. This should now be extended to become more developmental, establishing a dialogue between teacher and pupil and indicating the next steps for improvement. Some examples of marking included some evidence of pupil self-assessment. This should now be extended throughout the school and could also include opportunities for peer assessment as part of this.

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

The school follows 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme of Religious Education. The Religious Education curriculum is enriched by cross curricular links, a comprehensive range of different teaching strategies and activities and school visits.

Curriculum time allocation is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The Religious Education curriculum includes opportunities for prayer and reflection and nurtures pupils' spiritual and moral development. It builds on pupils' prior experience and relates learning in Religious Education to pupils' own lives. The curriculum is appropriately adapted to suit the needs of all learners. The school provides good opportunities for the study of other faiths, and pupils have enjoyed visits to places of worship related to these.

The school hopes to benefit from working with other Catholic primary schools within the Umbrella Trust and anticipates sharing expertise and training opportunities. In particular, this will provide the opportunity for external moderation of pupils' work.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The quality of Collective Worship is excellent. The act of Collective Worship observed included representation from the whole school community and was a personal and relevant celebration marking the starting of the school year. The school community demonstrated reverence and respect, which was further evidenced in the prayers and reflections in the lessons observed as part of the inspection. Pupils are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and also contribute their own prayers to liturgical celebrations.

Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, with a wealth of prayer and worship opportunities taking place in school daily life and the school year. Mission Weeks enhance pupils' sense of vocation and encourage them to explore and deepen their faith.

Parents and carers are invited to participate in the school's Collective Worship and attendance is good.

The Parish Priest, Headteacher and Religious Education coordinator work together to strengthen home, school and parish links and value school Collective Worship as part of this partnership.