



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 101042

St Boniface Catholic Primary School
Undine Street
Tooting
SW17 8PP

Inspection date: 12 March 2013

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| Chair of Governors: | Mr Mark Wareham |
| Headteacher: | Mrs Siobhan Kerins |
| Inspectors: | Mr Tom Cahill Mrs Joan Lenahan |

EDUCATION COMMISSION

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Boniface is a one and a half form entry, voluntary aided primary school, situated in the heart of Tooting Broadway, in the parish of St Boniface, Tooting. The school is located within the Balham Deanery and is maintained by Wandsworth LA. The school's main feeder parish is St Boniface, although the school also accepts a very small number of pupils from other local parishes. Nearly all pupils who attend the school are baptised Catholics. The school is very heavily oversubscribed, with four applicants for each of the 45 places available each year.

The school caters for pupils aged 3-11 years and the number of pupils on roll at the time of the inspection was 314 in the main school and 46 in the nursery. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is around 9%, which is below average. Four pupils hold statements of special educational needs and a total of 71 pupils are on the SEN register. The school has a very diverse intake in terms of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, with over 21 different home languages being spoken by the pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness as a Catholic school

GRADE

1

St Boniface is an outstandingly effective Catholic school and fully deserves the excellent reputation it has established within the local Catholic community and beyond. As one parent said, "The school has created a loving, warm environment, enriched with a strong Catholic family ethos, where families are very involved from the outset". Parental feedback, through a large number of questionnaires returned at the time of the inspection, was overwhelmingly positive and highly supportive of the school. There is a very positive commitment from the governors, senior leaders and staff, to ensure the Catholic identity of the school is strongly articulated and at the heart of everything the school provides for its pupils. All are aware of the school's mission statement, which is prominently displayed around the school. The governors review the statement regularly. The school's mission is clearly lived out on a daily basis by pupils and staff to ensure that: "St Boniface is a happy place to work and learn". As the excellent self-evaluation form provided by the school points out, "There is no clear distinction between the Catholic life of the school and any other life, since living out the Gospel is central to all that we do as individuals and as a community".

The school is visibly Catholic, with a range of excellent, high quality displays and artefacts, such as the mosaic in the reception area depicting St Boniface and the words "One who does good".

The school enjoys very positive relationships with its parish church and the excellent support provided by the parish priest and associate priests is very much appreciated. The school makes excellent use of the parish church as both a teaching resource and for liturgies and acts of worship.

Pupil behaviour is outstanding. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very positive and based on mutual respect for one another. Pupils feel safe and bullying is very rare. Where it does occur, the school takes firm action to resolve matters quickly. As one student from the School Council said: "This is a do as you are told school and not a do as you want school".

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

St Boniface is a very secure school and has no significant areas of weakness. As a result, governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure the very recently appointed Religious Education coordinator has sufficient time to carry out her duties, including the monitoring of teaching, to ensure good practice is consistent and shared across the school.
- Consider including a separate section in the school development plan for Religious Education, so that governors are fully aware of the targets and changes taking place in this core curriculum area.
- Consider developing further the global dimension of community cohesion to help deepen the pupils' understanding of life in underdeveloped countries.

The Catholic life of the school

Leadership and management

GRADE 1

The school is exceptionally well led by the long serving headteacher who, as one parent said "knows every child and family at the school". She has provided a clear vision and strategic leadership to the school over many years and has been ably supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher and governing body. This has enabled this school to progress from being a good Catholic school, in its last Section 48 Inspection in 2007, to one which is now clearly an outstanding Catholic school in almost every respect. The headteacher has overseen the development of a dedicated staff team, clearly committed to providing the best for all pupils in a positive and hard working environment, where all pupils are expected to make sustained and rapid progress and nothing less will do. Governance is also a strength of the school. Governors provide a very effective blend of challenge and support to senior leaders at the school. They know the school very well in terms of its strengths and the few areas that require improvement. The key issues highlighted in the last report have been successfully addressed and the school has outstanding capacity to improve.

Governors visit the school on a regular basis and participate in the religious life of the school, for example, the link governor for Religious Education plays the keyboard at the school assembly. However, governors could monitor developments in Religious Education more effectively if these were incorporated into a separate section of the school development plan. Pupil voice is encouraged through the School Council and is highly valued by the pupils.

Quality of provision for personal and collective worship

GRADE 1

Assemblies and collective worship play a very important part in the ethos and daily life of the school and are a great strength. They are delivered in such a way as to always challenge pupils' thinking, self-discipline and ability to reflect; thus helping them to develop spiritually. Therefore, the school more than fulfils its statutory obligations with regard to worship. There is a robust cycle of assemblies covering year groups, key stages, class and whole school. Opportunities are provided for private worship in class and in assemblies and liturgies. In an outstanding assembly for Years 1 and 2, the pupils entered the hall in a very prayerful manner, with their hands already joined. The pupils were enthralled by the telling of the story of the Prodigal Son. The pupils were actively involved in impromptu role play of the story and said the Our Father reverently, using sign language, leading to a peaceful and friendly conclusion with the pupils singing "Shalom". Every classroom has a focal prayer point although, in some lessons, opportunities were missed to make effective use of these. The school's strong links with its home parish is reflected in three Masses per term which the school attends, usually on a Friday morning. The school is joined by the parish community, including many parents on these occasions, further strengthening home school parish links.

Community cohesion

GRADE 1

This school is outstandingly cohesive and inclusive, rejoicing and celebrating the gifts and talents of its very mixed community. Relationships are excellent at all levels. School leaders have taken every opportunity to build highly effective links with the parish community. The school's relentless focus on "Living in Jesus' Way" has resulted in a unified community, where everyone is seen as part of one big family. Pupils and staff spoke proudly of their annual carnival to celebrate the ethnic diversity found within the school, which reflects the diverse community in which the school is located. The effective teaching of other world faiths in the school also helps promote community cohesion. This is helped by the very good use of the local teachers' centre which provides high quality resources and artefacts for the teaching of other world faiths. Governors, staff and parents

have a very strong commitment to St Boniface, being a parish school, serving the needs of the parish, but also serving the needs of the wider community, as well as the international community. The school makes special provision for families where English is not spoken at home, as seen where a Tamil workshop was provided during the annual curriculum evening. Fund raising plays an important part of school life. The school has a very active and supportive PTA that raises funds to support the work of the school. The Friends of St Boniface provide funding so that all students can attend 'The Life of Christ' pageant at Wintershall each year.

Pupils and staff also support a range of local, national and international charities, such as CAFOD and the Cabrini Society. The school also opens its facilities to the local community for such things as dance classes and choir practice. Pupils would benefit further by the school developing more formal links with a named school or community in the developing world.

Publication date ... 13 May 2013

Religious Education

Achievement and standards in Religious Education

GRADE 1

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. By the time pupils leave the school, they have made excellent progress and their attainment is well above average. This reflects the school's determination to ensure all students, including those who are disadvantaged or have special needs, make the best possible progress during their time at the school. The school has ensured that skills required by the students to achieve the higher levels are taught more discreetly, so that attainment and progress in Religious Education is equal, or better than, the high levels already achieved by pupils in national literacy tests. Teachers skilfully use Religious Education to help develop the literacy skills of the pupils by highlighting key words and repeating more difficult words, where appropriate. The quality and quantity of work in the pupils' exercise books reflects the very high expectations of the class teachers.

Pupils have a very positive attitude to Religious Education and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. They are fully engaged by the stimulating delivery of lessons, which are based on 'The Way, The Truth and the Life' programme. The participation of pupils in their lessons, such as the inclusion of pair work, discussion, drama and role-play, is seen as key to successful teaching and learning and is the expectation of every teacher. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary, always reflecting the question "What would Jesus do?".

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

GRADE 1

Inspectors agree with the school's own assessment that teaching is consistently good across both key stages and much of it is outstanding. Effective use is made of the supporting materials provided by the 'The Way, The Truth and the Life' scheme and is particularly helpful in supporting newly qualified staff deliver effective lessons. The scheme has been mapped against the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The vast majority of lessons seen by inspectors were all very well planned and teachers delivered their lessons in a very confident and enthusiastic way, to which the pupils warmly responded. On a few occasions, teachers spent too much time directing the lesson while the pupils were passive, rather than being more actively involved in the lesson and their learning. Probing questions are skilfully used to check the understanding of the pupils as the lesson progresses, as well as to develop their critical thinking skills. Assessment procedures are thorough and there is a systematic approach to tracking pupil progress. Work in pupils' books reflects depth of coverage.

Marking is affirmative in the main, although it does not always show pupils how they can improve.

The Religious Education curriculum

GRADE 1

The Religious Education curriculum is well organised and well resourced. It meets fully the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and 10% curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education. Pupils study other world faiths as part of their curriculum and make very good use of external resources to help deepen their understanding; for example, they have a link with a local Muslim school.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

GRADE 2

Although the new Religious Education coordinator has only been in post since the start of the academic year, she provides enthusiastic leadership for the subject. She has been proactive in ensuring she has the correct skills and knowledge to be a highly effective coordinator and is highly regarded by all staff. As a result, she is able to provide very good support to staff in terms of planning lessons and assessment. The headteacher and

coordinator have built good relationships with other local Catholic primary schools to ensure the moderation and accuracy of assessment in Religious Education. This has also helped in sharing good practice across other schools in the deanery and helping the school to reduce the workload involved, without impacting on the quality of the assessment. 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme is highly structured and very well resourced. This supports planning and the very confident delivery of lessons by all teachers, including those new to the school. Currently, the coordinator only works part time, which is not ideal, but she gives very generously of her time and also assists in the home parish. However, to ensure the coordinator can monitor the quality of teaching in Religious Education and ensure good practice is shared, more contact time needs to be allocated to the role. Senior leaders provide very good support to the coordinator and, together, should be able to ensure the high quality provision already in place is maintained and continues to develop.

Publication date ... 13 May 2013