

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number	101036
LEA	Wandsworth
Inspection number	276446
Inspection dates	30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Date of previous inspection	30 November 2005
School address	Nightingale Square Balham London SW12 8QJ
Telephone number	02086733080
Fax number	02086730788
Chair of governors	Father Stephen Langridge
Headteacher	Miss Susan Lawless

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Ghost is an oversubscribed, average-sized Roman Catholic Primary School. About two thirds of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder represent a wide range of ethnic and cultural heritages. A small number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties is about average. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Three teachers have joined the school in the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is an outstanding school in which the pupils make excellent progress and standards are exceptionally high. The school has a more modest view of its effectiveness but, given the standards attained by the pupils and their progress, it is clear that the school gives excellent value for money. This is because the leadership, management and teaching are outstanding, the pupils have excellent attitudes to work and their behaviour is exemplary. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils, based on the thorough assessment of their progress and needs. The school works closely with parents, most of whom are very pleased with the education provided for their children. A few parents feel that insufficient account is taken of their views. Strategies are being established to find out and consider their opinions but the school recognises, and inspectors agree, that there is still more to do. The pupils have access to a broad and interesting curriculum that contributes to the high standards. The arrangements for promoting the pupils' cultural awareness have improved. The pupils respect those of different backgrounds, but their knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own is limited. Excellent provision in the reception class ensures that the children make rapid progress and at least half exceed the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. The school has successfully raised standards since the last inspection and has accelerated the progress made by the pupils. There is no complacency, however, and the leaders of this outstanding school have the capacity to secure even further improvement.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

* increase the pupils' knowledge of cultures other than their own* strengthen the consultation with parents.

Achievement and standards

The pupils achieve outstandingly well, standards are exceptionally high and, taking account of their prior attainment, they make excellent progress. This is reflected in the school's performance in recent years in the national tests for seven and eleven year olds. The school set, and met, challenging targets in 2005. When the children join the reception class, most are working at levels which are above those expected for their age. They settle quickly, make rapid progress and by the end of reception, at least half exceed the goals expected of them. The pupils' excellent achievement is a direct result of the high quality teaching they receive and their eagerness to learn. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys, girls or pupils of different

minority ethnic background or ability. The school has dealt very effectively with the underachievement of more able pupils, identified in the last inspection. These pupils respond well to the high level of challenge they are given and their achievement is excellent.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. High levels of attendance, the pupils' interest in and enjoyment of work, their exemplary behaviour and respect for everyone are impressive. Their spiritual, moral and social development are excellent. The pupils contribute well to the school community by taking on extra responsibilities such as being sports captains and acting as 'buddies' for younger pupils. They take membership of the influential school council very seriously and contribute to the wider community by supporting charities. The pupils show initiative, for example by organising and presenting an anti-bullying drama at the governors' annual meeting for parents. They know how to stay healthy and fit and their excellent literacy and numeracy skills are contributing to their future economic well-being. The pupils are all developing into confident, articulate and polite young people.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The excellent teaching has a significant impact on the pupils' learning, the standards they reach and their progress. The work is planned very carefully to take account of the pupils' differing needs. The teachers ensure that the pupils know what they are expected to learn and have very high expectations that they will do so. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been dealt with very effectively through training, support and the recruitment of high quality staff. A wide range of strategies are now used very successfully to capture and sustain the pupils' interest. Consequently, there is a very strong sense of enjoyment amongst the pupils, one pupil reflecting the views of many by saying that his work in science is 'amazing.' A high level of challenge is provided for the more able pupils, so that they now achieve as well as their classmates. The capable teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of lessons, particularly for the pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English. The information from comprehensive and regular assessments enables teachers to have a detailed view of the pupils' progress, set targets and ensure that the pupils get the extra support or harder work they need. A very close check is kept on the pupils' understanding in lessons. Challenging questioning enables the teachers to deal with any misconceptions as they arise. Work is marked very thoroughly and the comments ensure that the pupils are well informed about how they are doing and what they need to do next. This is appreciated by the pupils. For example, those in Year 6 have a very clear understanding of the levels at which they are working and how they can improve.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The outstanding curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of activities, including French for all pupils and instrumental lessons for those in Years 4 and 5. Older pupils describe enthusiastically their class production of Macbeth. A good range of after-school clubs is very popular and well attended. School teams enjoy success in local matches and the pupils would like to see this extended to 'B' teams, so that more can take part in these events. Residential visits and adventurous pursuits provide particularly stimulating experiences. The pupils learn about the dangers of drugs and solvent abuse. Every opportunity is taken to invite external speakers, some of whom are parents. Weaknesses in the last inspection had been dealt with effectively. The provision for design and technology is now good and each subject is now well resourced. The arrangements for promoting the pupils' cultural awareness have improved. The pupils appreciate and respect those of different backgrounds, but their knowledge of other faiths and cultures is limited.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The pupils are given outstanding care, guidance and support. The staff know pupils individually, doing all they can to ensure they enjoy school. All systems for child protection are properly in place. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils attain their potential and feel safe and secure. Most parents are very supportive of the care taken of their children. Strong support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. The success of this provision is monitored regularly and, as a result, these pupils progress very well. Older pupils, in particular, understand how well they are doing in relation to national curriculum levels and how to improve their work. Expectations of the pupils are very high and they enjoy rising to the challenge.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governors has a major impact on the progress made by the pupils, the standards they achieve, their personal development and well-being. There is a very strong commitment to sustaining high standards and ensuring that all pupils, whatever their ability, gender or background are able to fulfil their potential. Most parents are very supportive of the school. One parent describes how their children 'love school and we love sending them there.' Others report that they are 'very proud' and 'privileged' that their children attend and another writes that she has 'nothing but praise for the management and teaching'. A few parents, however, feel that insufficient account is taken of their views, for example when changes are made to school uniform. The school is establishing strategies to deal with this but recognises, and inspectors agree, that there is still more to do. Considerable improvement has been secured since the last inspection. Teamwork between the governors, headteacher, deputy, other senior staff and subject leaders have been instrumental in achieving and maintaining high standards and improving the provision in subjects such as science and

design and technology. Long-term planning has improved and, despite continued success in the national tests, governors and staff ensure that there is no room for complacency. Expectations are high. A very close check is kept on the teaching and learning and a thorough analysis of test results and assessments contributes to a full and frank evaluation of its performance. Areas for development are identified and dealt with rigorously as, for example, in the successful efforts to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting. The school leaders do not lose sight of the importance of the pupils' welfare, however, and the way this is supported is outstanding. This is due to the commitment of all staff, including those who supervise the pupils at lunchtimes. Given the school's track record of improvement, there is excellent capacity to improve further.

Grade: 1

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
Overall effectiveness		
How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA
Achievement and standards		
How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA
¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.		
Personal development and well-being		
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA
The quality of provision		
How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA
Leadership and management		
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA
The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy		
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily		Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise		Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse		Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health		Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe		
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements		Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place		Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism		Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them		Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution		
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships		Yes

Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for the very friendly way in which you welcomed us to your school during the recent inspection. This letter is to tell you about our findings. We enjoyed talking to you. Your views and opinions have given us a lot of helpful information. Many of you told us how good your school is and feel that you are getting on well. We agree with you. Your school is excellent and there are many things happening in your school that are better than we usually find.

We were delighted to see that your work is of a very high standard. One of the reasons you are doing so well is that your headteacher and staff make sure that you are able to do your best. Your teachers check that those of you who need extra help are getting it. Another reason why you are doing well is because you are very keen to learn. Your behaviour is excellent which means that everyone is able to get on with their work. You told us that a lot is expected of you and that you enjoy the challenge of trying harder work. We were very pleased to see that your handwriting has improved so much. Like you, most of your parents are very proud of your school and are pleased with what the school does to help you. A few of your parents would like to be more included in the decisions that are made, so your headteacher and staff are going to find more ways to make this happen. Many of you told us that you feel safe in school and are well looked after. We are pleased that so many of you take part in clubs and other activities outside of lessons. Some of you help the school to run smoothly by taking part in the school council, helping with the younger children and doing other jobs, such as being sports captains. Well done. We think that you could learn more about different cultures and customs and we know that you will work hard with your teachers to put this right.

Once again, thank you very much for your help. You are right to be proud of your school. We are sure that you will carry on working hard and doing well and we wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector

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