

Inspection of Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School

Nightingale Square, Balham, London, SW12 8QJ

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of its pupils. Pupils achieve exceedingly well in national tests for reading and mathematics, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the early years, children get off to an excellent start, particularly in developing a wide, rich vocabulary and strong early writing skills.

Pupils are exceptionally courteous and caring. They make a strong contribution to this safe and happy school. For instance, in Years 5 and 6, pupils act as buddies for children in Reception and Year 1. They help to ensure that younger pupils enjoy breaktime and check on their wellbeing. Pupils of all ages play harmoniously together.

Pupils take up responsibilities widely, regularly contributing to their school and local communities. For instance, children in the early years help to tidy up, pupils in Year 4 collect clothing donations for charity and in Year 6, pupils support a homeless shelter.

The school broadens pupils' experiences through an ambitious extracurricular programme of visits, clubs and special events. One highlight is a careers fair which introduces pupils to a range of professions. The school's extensive work to develop pupils' talents and interests includes a strong focus on sports which are popular. All pupils from Year 3 onwards regularly represent their school in sporting events.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is broad and interesting. Pupils enjoy their learning and develop detailed knowledge with particular strengths in some subject areas. For example, they draw on a range of methods and materials to produce high quality artwork. They develop a comprehensive knowledge of sporting techniques, such as how to bat, bowl and field a ball with increasing control in readiness for playing cricket later on.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. In the early years, training has had a strong impact on developing the expertise of all staff. There is a sharp focus on extending children's knowledge at every opportunity. Teachers across the school present information clearly, breaking it down into manageable chunks. They know the needs of pupils with SEND and make a range of adaptations to support them in learning the curriculum well. Teachers routinely engage pupils in meaningful discussion to broaden their thinking.

Currently, the school is redeveloping some aspects of the curriculum where the key knowledge to be learned is less clearly defined than in the rest of the curriculum. Where this is the case, teaching does not emphasise the most important concepts and, as a result, pupils find it difficult to recall some of the content they have been taught. Published outcomes for those subjects that are assessed in national tests are

exceptionally high. Outcomes in other subjects are more variable, and particularly in subjects where the curriculum is not as well developed.

The school checks in a variety of ways how well pupils have learned the curriculum, providing leaders with a broad understanding of where improvements could be made. They act on this promptly and effectively. On occasion, however, the school does not check that pupils' understanding is secure before setting them work to do or moving on to new learning. As a result, pupils occasionally have gaps and misconceptions in their learning that are not addressed swiftly.

Pupils benefit from the many reading opportunities provided by the school. The texts chosen by the school have rich vocabulary and cover a range of genres. Pupils develop an interest in books, discussing them routinely and considering how the author has written them to appeal to readers in multiple ways. Staff have been well trained in the school's phonics scheme, which is delivered systematically to pupils at the earlier stages of reading. Reading books are well-matched to pupils' phonic knowledge which develops swiftly. Pupils who need additional help with reading are quickly identified and provided suitable support.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are attentive and focus well so that learning proceeds uninterrupted. Leaders take fair and effective action in instances where a pupil needs additional support to meet the school's expectations. The school encourages and supports families to maintain exceptionally high attendance rates.

Pupils are taught comprehensively about healthy relationships, including how to be a good friend and how to resolve conflict. They are taught about unhealthy relationships and other risks, including online, and when to tell an adult about any concerns they may have. Pupils are taught extensively about equalities, including the importance of respect and tolerance for others' beliefs and backgrounds. They are encouraged to take careful account of others' views.

The governing body has made a strong contribution to ensuring stability in the quality of the school's work during a period of change in staffing, including leadership, and ensured that staff and pupil wellbeing remains a priority. Together with school leaders and staff, they have ensured that priorities for improvement have remained the focus of the school's work, including provision for pupils with SEND, which has developed considerably in recent time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are less well developed than others. In places, the key concepts that pupils need to remember for future learning are less clearly

defined than in other subjects. As a result, teaching, including the work pupils are given, does not focus on helping pupils to recall those concepts securely and sometimes pupils may forget them. The school should ensure that the key concepts that pupils need to know are prioritised in curriculum planning and that teaching focuses on helping pupils to remember key content.

- In some instances, the school does not identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge and correct them. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in some areas of the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils' knowledge is checked systematically so that gaps and misconceptions can be identified and swiftly addressed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	101036
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10327634
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Bogle
Headteacher	Jared Brading (executive headteacher) Gabriella Murphy (head of school)
Website	www.holyghost.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 October 2013

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Southwark. The school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was carried out in November 2018.
- There have been several changes to leadership since the school's last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and PE.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for early years, SEND, behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked thoroughly into the identification of and provision for pupils with SEND. They held meetings with leaders, discussions with pupils, made visits to lessons, took account of responses to surveys, reviewed pupils' work and visited all areas of the school to observe provision for pupils with SEND.

Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jamie Hallums

Ofsted Inspector

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