

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101036
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	323395
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Todd
Headteacher	Miss Susan Lawless
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Nightingale Square Balham London SW12 8QJ

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Inspection number	323395

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The main areas investigated were: the consistency of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' achievements; the extent to which the school is sustaining and improving standards; pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Other areas were not investigated in detail but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments are not justified and these have been included in the report.

Description of the school

The school has an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The percentage who do not speak English as their first language is about average. The school has a similar proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than average, the largest group of these pupils have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities (dyslexia). The school holds the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. It has a small Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with one Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School is a good school. It makes a real difference to pupils' lives and has some outstanding features. Parents are almost universal in their praise. One typical comment was, 'The school offers an extraordinary mix of warm, personal nurturing together with...high standards and expectations in behaviour and academic achievement. It's hard to imagine a better school.'

Children enter the EYFS with the expected level of skills. They leave Year 6 with above average standards. The achievement of all pupils, including those with dyslexia, is good. This is because pupils are well taught and follow an excellent curriculum and, combined with exceptional care, guidance and support, this enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to achieve well. The school is not complacent about standards and, through careful and systematic checks, quickly identifies any fluctuations in subject performance or any variations between groups. It then takes rapid action to maintain above average standards. Leaders set clear, challenging attainment targets, which are usually met.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school is a harmonious, happy community where behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite and considerate and play an outstanding role in the school and wider community. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, befriend the youngest pupils enthusiastically. They are very supportive of their younger charges, who grow in confidence as a result. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, reflected in high levels of attendance. They have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, making sensible choices at lunchtime and they are very keen to be active in the playground. Pupils have a good awareness of others and play safely and sensibly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has significantly improved pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity and their multicultural awareness since the previous inspection. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education, thanks to good social, literacy, numeracy and computer skills as well as their willingness to do their bit for their community.

Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school so that pupils make good rates of progress in relation to their starting points. Classrooms are happy and positive places. Lessons are thoroughly planned and offer challenging activities to meet pupils' learning needs. Teachers manage pupils very well and keep up a brisk pace so that they are constantly engaged in a variety of activities. Classroom relationships are very positive. Pupils work extremely well in pairs and small groups and show impressive levels of independence from their earliest days in the school. Teaching assistants provide good support in most lessons, although there are inconsistencies across classes because they are not always deployed to provide direct support to pupils during whole-class teaching sessions. There are some inconsistencies in teaching caused by the regular turnover of staff, such as in the pace of lessons and variations in the demands placed on pupils.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides many good opportunities for enrichment through the good variety of well-attended after-school clubs. Furthermore, numerous residential trips offered to the oldest three years in the school provide interesting learning opportunities in very different environments. These elements promote pupils enthusiasm and, in turn, lead to good achievement.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. The school pays close attention to pupils' views, ensuring they are content and confident. Pupils know adults will help them, saying, 'There is

always someone to go to if you have a problem.' The school council plays a prominent part in anti-bullying week, undertaking surveys of pupils and running assemblies. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust, and the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well met. These considerable strengths promote a very positive ethos in the school and lead to very good behaviour, happy pupils and highly constructive relationships. Teachers are perceptive in their understanding of pupils' needs, providing very good academic support and guidance. Pupils know how to improve their work. They understand their targets and are motivated by the skilful way teachers mark their work.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides inspiring leadership and her influence on staff, pupils and governors is positive and empowering. Staff strongly share her commitment to excellence, striving to maintain high standards and provide high quality care and education. This has a positive impact on standards. The school is very inclusive and works exceptionally well to ensure equality of opportunity for all. This is exemplified in national test results, which are consistent across all groups of pupils. The EYFS has good leadership and management, which has established good achievement across the Reception year.

Regular staff changes have meant that the school has had to work very hard to maintain standards. There are comprehensive systems for monitoring the school and its self-evaluation is very good. Thorough development planning, shared amongst all staff and governors, ensures that the school plans well for the future. Governance is outstanding. Governors take care to get to know the school very well and are a real asset. They work in very close partnership with the staff and use their great understanding to support and challenge the school as appropriate. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection and, based on its recent track record, its capacity for the future is also good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class. Most enter with the expected level of skills for their age. They leave securely above expectations in most areas, achieving well during their time in Reception. Provision for their learning and development is good. Teaching is lively, imaginative and supportive. Stimulating activities are carefully planned to promote skills and understanding in all areas of development. The new outdoor area is excellent and used very well. Children have splendid opportunities to try out lively, messy and noisy activities, which they thoroughly enjoy.

Provision for children's welfare is good. Staff are caring and attentive to children's needs, creating a safe and welcoming environment. They have established very good relationships with families and know children in their care well. The school has not fully allocated each child to a small group to make the overview of each child's welfare, learning and development easier to manage. The EYFS is well led and the Reception class is well organised and resourced.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure EYFS key workers oversee the personal and academic development of suitably small groups of children.
- Plan activities so that all teaching assistants contribute to pupils' learning at all stages of lessons.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Ghost Catholic Primary School, London, SW12 8QJ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. It was very good to talk to you during the day. You told us how much you enjoy school and we agree it is a good school. Some things are excellent.

The way you are cared for is outstanding and you told us how you feel you could go to anyone at the school for help and advice. This helps your personal development, which is also outstanding. The inspectors were especially impressed by your excellent and mature behaviour. Well done! The range of subjects and activities you do, known as the curriculum, is also outstanding.

The school is well led and managed and regular checks are made to ensure your achievement is good. The standards you reach are above average. Teaching is good and lively and we know you find lessons fun and join in enthusiastically. This helps you learn well. There are two areas where we have asked the school to improve. These are:

- children in the Reception Class should be divided into small groups; each one with have a special adult to look after their needs
- in lessons, teaching assistants should be more active in helping you to learn.

Thanks for all your help on the inspection. It was a great pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

John Carnaghan

Lead Inspector