



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 102910

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School
Queen's Road
Richmond
TW10 6HN

Inspection date: 17 October 2014

Chair of Governors:	Dr Oona Stannard
Headteacher:	Mrs Jane Hines
Inspectors:	Mr Stephen Beck Mr John Bonnici

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

SECTION 48

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Introduction

Description of the school

St Elizabeth's School is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Mortlake Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Richmond upon Thames Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are, St Elizabeth's, Richmond; Our Lady Queen of Peace, East Sheen; St Winifred's, Kew Gardens and St Thomas Aquinas, Ham with a small proportion of pupils from St Margaret's, Twickenham. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 99%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is at least 10% in all key stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 261. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly around average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly below average. Around 12% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The school draws pupils from a wide catchment and the intake is rich in variety in terms of economic and cultural background. A significant number of pupils are from White European backgrounds. With 43% of pupils having English as an additional language this is well above the national average.

Date of previous inspection:

5 November 2009

Overall Grade:

1

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

St Elizabeth's School was graded as outstanding at the time of its last inspection and continues to be so. It is to its credit that it has not rested on its laurels as it continues to strive for excellence. Its success lies in its view that complacency is not an option. It is a highly effective, distinctly Catholic school that places equal value on academic achievement and the pupils' personal faith development. It strongly recognises the individuality of 'faith journey' in a caring, nurturing, Catholic community that embraces pupils of all abilities and background. Prayer and worship are a vital part of the life of the school and are of considerable quality. The school states that the words of its 'aim', *'Love one another as I have loved you'* are central to all that the school does and this is certainly lived out in the daily life of the school. As soon as you enter the school the strong Catholic ethos is clearly evident and the school is welcoming from the point of first contact. It has a coherent sense of mission and purpose. The drive to develop the whole child and to nurture individual worth is embedded in school culture. Pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence in all areas of their academic and personal development. They, in response, learn to respect all members of the community as equally valuable. Very strong home, school, parish partnerships are a strength of the school and the school strives to further nourish this by continuing to build and improve on the effectiveness of these links.

The key to the school's ongoing success is the continuing strength of leadership. The newly appointed Headteacher gives outstanding direction to staff and pupils as she nurtures and empowers them to give of their very best. The school's high quality leadership team, coupled with outstanding subject leadership by the dedicated Religious Education coordinator, ensures dissemination of the school's clear vision, thereby creating a common sense of purpose among the community as a whole. They provide excellent role models and are given, along with all staff, a wide range of development opportunities to which the school gives a high priority. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour exemplary.

Governors are passionate about the ongoing development of the Catholic ethos of the school providing both support and challenge when discussing priorities for improvement. They know their school well. They confidently question and call the school to account to ensure that the school's Catholic identity is maintained and developed. All leaders work together to secure outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils. An arrangement with two other local Catholic schools to provide an additional form of entry each year on a rolling programme has been excellently managed and serves the local Catholic community well.

Pupils make good progress because of a well-planned curriculum that develops in pupils a strong understanding of their Catholic identity, enriched through a creative curriculum and strong partnerships with all involved in the school. It meets the pupils' differing needs while consistently excellent teaching also challenges their thinking. This is underpinned by effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment. It is commendable to see the whole school community working together to develop and maximise opportunities for the benefit of all.

It is noteworthy that with almost 50% of questionnaires returned, virtually 100% of those were positive. As a parent responded on their questionnaire, "The care to make every child progress in every way is outstanding. They consider societal implications in the

things that they do." Another said, "The new leadership team at St Elizabeth's had a tough act to follow. It is clear they are doing an amazing job in a very positive way."

As evidenced in the school's own excellent self-evaluation, it has a depth of understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Numerous opportunities for personal and collective worship result in pupils' spiritual and moral development being outstanding. Prayer and worship are exceedingly strong and integral to the life of the school. Worship and liturgical messages are delivered in a lively, interesting and prayerful way and where possible are interactive. Worship is greatly enhanced by high quality music, singing, artefacts and focal points. Acts of worship are not seen in isolation, but are reflected on in class, deepening pupils' relationship with God. The Catholic Life of the school is marked by the awareness of the governors, Headteacher and leadership teams of the importance of promoting pupil contributions to the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to recognise commonality and respect differences and as a result are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth.

The quality of Religious Education seen was never less than good with many outstanding features. The teaching team has great strength and considerable subject expertise. As a result of excellent teaching, pupils have high levels of religious literacy from which they can build moral reasoning. The school has a strong capacity to maintain and build on its outstanding provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

The school was advised at the time of the last inspection to continue to develop the marking process and comments to encourage pupils' personal reflection.' It has taken this on wholeheartedly and developed marking in Religious Education to a high and consistent standard. Pupils regularly reflect on their work, as exemplified by their respond booklets.

It is to the school's credit that it continues to have no significant areas for improvement. It has a strong capacity to maintain and develop further, largely as a result of comprehensive and accurate self-evaluation and strength of the staff team that the inspectors have been able to validate. There is a shared vision with regard to the next steps. This is supported by good evidence of effective monitoring of teaching, learning and provision for prayer and collective worship. There is a strong sense of purpose, drive and an ability to move the school on in a culture of continuous lifelong learning for all.

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Further improve the school's very good assessment through the use of a more interactive tool that would better facilitate the interrogation of data and identification of the progress of vulnerable groups.
- Undertake a policy review to establish greater clarity for parents in regard to a whole school cross curricular policy for Education for Personal Relationships, including Sex Education with reference to the Diocesan Policy for Education in Human Love.

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

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and that of the parishes to which they belong. The school works hard to build on and further develop these links. Pupils are very inclusive in their behaviour and acceptance of different backgrounds and needs. They are interested in finding out about other faiths and are fascinated by similarities and differences. Pupils are eager to take on responsibility within school and the wider community and are given a broad range of opportunities to do so as School Councillors, Peer Mentors, Play Leaders, Altar Servers, Class Monitors, Charity Officers, Health and Safety Officers and Eco Team members. Through these roles pupils are very aware of the Catholic character of the school and what this means in terms of relationships with God. Their behaviour in being ambassadors for the school and in caring for other children shows them living out the Gospel. It is central to St Elizabeth's ethos that each child is made in God's image and as such is nurtured so that they develop their unique gifts and value everyone's talents.

Pupils are articulate thoughtful individuals. They are proud of their school and very thoughtful of their community and others. The pupils are very enthusiastic about gaining an understanding of other faiths and cultures. As they themselves said, "Knowing about others will enable us to understand them and live in harmony." A parent commented, "An excellent Catholic school. We are so pleased with the Catholic education our child is receiving. We were very pleased with the recent visit to a Hindu temple. It's a lovely family school." The school council were clear that what they liked about the school was 'equality and fairness' that sees everyone treated the same. A council member said, "I am taught even though I am not at the top."

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils receive a high quality Religious Education, which impacts greatly on their own spiritual and moral development as well as their knowledge of the Catholic faith. Evidence of this can be seen in the high quality discussion which takes place in Religious Education lessons, the children's growing awareness of the needs of others and their ability to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), Special Educational Needs (SEN) and emotional behavioural needs receive the support they need to be able to make progress in their learning in Religious Education. The Religious Education curriculum is enriched by educational visits: Reception children visit Our Lady Queen of Peace Church to re-enact a baptism. Year 3 pupils visit St Elizabeth's Church, Year 1 visit the Living Nativity at London Zoo and all classes in Key Stage 2 visit a place of worship for another faith. It is planned for Year 6 to experience 'The Life of Christ' at Wintershall.

Where possible, cross curricular links are made between Religious Education and other subjects. Within Religious Education lessons children have the opportunity to respond through Information and Communication Technology (ICT), drama, art, and music. Links to Religious Education are also made in other subjects, for example the study of world war two in Year 6, Remembrance in Year 2 and the Romans in Year 4. Within the Religious Education curriculum the pupils are taught that as Christians they have been called to live

out the teachings of Jesus. Guest speakers help them to understand how some people do this. Examples of these are: Monsignor Bill Saunders spoke to Year 6 about his vocation to the priesthood, school parents talking about the vocation of being a parent and nurses from the school community talking about their role. Children are also encouraged within the curriculum to find examples of inspirational people who were called to serve others. Pupils clearly enjoy Religious Education lessons and they understand their value. They are able to apply what they have learnt in the context of their daily lives and are focussed. The vast majority of pupils concentrate well and are eager to complete tasks independently. They can discuss what they have learnt and show that they are reflective, not only in lessons, but generally. Progress is evident within lessons and over time, as reflected in pupil workbooks. Religious Education is highly valued and there are no significant differences in the progress of vulnerable groups. Attainment in Religious Education is evidenced to be high and is at least in line with other national curriculum subjects. Pupils are religiously literate across the school and this is a strength. Work in books is very well presented and demonstrates progress over time. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and record it in a variety of ways settling quickly to work, demonstrating an ability to work individually, in pairs and in groups and they rotate these approaches with ease.

The pupils make good use of their 'Respond' booklets at the end of each topic. This provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to reflect on their work and offers a useful self-assessment opportunity.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils respond very well to times of prayer and worship. They participate wholeheartedly in times of quiet reflection, in prayer and singing. They enjoy all aspects of school Masses – altar serving, reading, singing and in the presentation of the gifts. They are enthusiastic in leading aspects of acts of worship, reading, dramatisation, preparing prayers and offering their thoughts. Their thoughts are respected and valued by both their peers and adults. This promotes spiritual development within the whole school community. The pupils' responses to questions in assembly show an excellent understanding of different aspects of the Church's liturgical year. Questions often involve children thinking about the feelings of people in a range of biblical and everyday stories. This helps the pupils to place themselves in certain situations and reflect on how they would react. The range of responses across the school show a growing understanding of how, as Christians, they should behave and how their behaviour may sometimes involve courage and faith in oneself.

In an assembly attended on the theme of 'St Luke', the idea of him being a role model for pupils who were identified as having his name or a derivation of it, was thought provoking. Pupils responded well to questions, were attentive and engaged throughout. Good use was made of scripture and the focal point, with the assembly concluding with delightful singing in which staff fully participated. A pupil read a new school prayer that had been written by pupils in a prayer club. The prayer was given additional value when pupils were told that staff were using it at the start of all staff meetings.

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

Religious Education is strongly prioritised as a core subject and reviews of the effectiveness of teaching in this area are undertaken in the same way as for the other core subject; through regular scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of teaching. The drive for continual improvement is evidenced through documented feedback to individuals and the whole teaching staff. The school is well served by an excellent governing body that provides challenge and support to the school's judgements through learning walks, observations and scrutiny of work. The governors work with the religious co-ordinator and headteacher on self-review. They know their school well and offer expertise and rigour in a shared drive to further develop Religious Education in the school. Time is given for staff training and discussion. The Religious Education co-ordinator scrutinises the medium term plans for each topic.

The Headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator jointly analyse the lesson observations to identify common threads across the year groups and areas of development. In the academic year 2013-14 all the Religious Education lessons observed were graded as either good or outstanding. This joint and collegiate approach serves an additional purpose by way of moderating judgements.

A termly cycle of Religious Education lesson observations is established with PSHE lessons observations being in addition to these. This monitoring cycle informs CPD which is provided on a regular basis by the Religious Education co-ordinator, Diocesan training, and through the local cluster of Catholic schools.

The termly assessed topics are levelled by each class teacher and data is entered into a tracker sheet that can be accessed by all teachers, the subject co-ordinator and the headteacher. The Religious Education co-ordinator analyses the levels to ensure that all pupils are making at least expected progress and to see if there are any trends emerging so that action may be taken as swiftly as necessary, so that good practice may be shared. The attainment of groups of children with EAL, SEN and in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant is monitored and evaluated and intervention is put in place as appropriate.

The outcomes of lesson observations are reported to governors in the Headteacher's Report and pupil progress and attainment in Religious Education is analysed in the Governors' *Pupil Performance, Standards and Curriculum Committee*.

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

Religious Education is seen as a core subject and leaders prioritise Religious Education. It is prioritised in the *School Development Plan*, is well resourced and receives funding comparable to other core subjects. Time is given for staff training and discussion (particularly when a new topic is to be covered). It is an opportune time to commence a sharing of the excellent practice that is evident.

The Religious Education coordinator is proactive in providing information for staff, making sure that they understand Catholic doctrine and the liturgical year.

The new parish priest is generous with his time and is developing a chaplaincy role to the school community which is appreciated. Parish relationships are excellent. The headteacher and parish priest whilst only relatively new in post have already established a very positive, collegiate, working relationship. They are focussed on taking the strong foundations and traditions in place forward and making them their own. The parish priest has already noted the way teachers transmit faith from a personal level, in a way that is very effective, due to the quality of catechesis achieved.

The school benefits from a strong governing body that is increasingly proactive in providing both support and challenge through their recent initiative of link governors.

Parents are provided with information on the Religious Education curriculum in line with other areas and feel well supported to help their children at home.

The school could consider reviewing the contents of its website to provide opportunities to more explicitly celebrate the excellent and diverse religious life and curriculum of the school.

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

School observations show a consistent level of good and outstanding teaching. There is a number of experienced staff, including the Religious Education coordinator, who work hard to support new staff and those of other faiths.

Lessons are varied, lively and enthuse pupils. Staff are very pro-active in finding out more and have a desire to 'get it right'. Marking is thorough and gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on their learning. Developmental marking is evident with opportunities for pupils to respond being clearly established. Teachers have high expectations of engagement and demonstrate the importance of Religious Education at St Elizabeth's. Teachers are skilled at questioning and lessons are planned and resourced to a high standard. No lessons observed were less than good with all having outstanding elements. The outstanding lessons seen were marked by challenge, creativity, strong cross curricular links and excellent classroom management. Lessons are strengthened by extensive new learning and progress that successfully builds on previous learning. Pupils are very well supported, especially those with additional needs. Supporting adults are well prepared, with the relationships between pupils and adults having a positive impact on learning.

Moderation has taken place at school level and plans are in place to develop this further within the deanery cluster. The planning of Religious Education topics links to prior learning, is differentiated and shows challenge for all abilities. All classes follow the 'Come and See' programme and teachers are encouraged to enhance this with additional resources and to use a variety of planned teaching styles to appeal to all learners. They also ensure that each medium term plan gives the children the opportunity to show that they have met the appropriate attainment target in their written work. Since Autumn Term 2014 all medium term plans have made reference to Bloom's Taxonomy to promote higher order thinking skills and enquiry-led teaching in lessons. There is a strong spirit of collaboration among staff in the planning and delivery of Religious Education. Lessons encourage enquiry and independence. This has led to increased pupil engagement and motivation.

Observations of Religious Education lessons show that time is used productively, that children are well-motivated and enthusiastic and that they are able to express themselves clearly. Teachers use questioning techniques to challenge and reinforce. The marking of Religious Education work is interactive and developmental.

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

Pupils clearly enjoy Religious Education lessons and they understand their value. They are able to apply what they have learnt in the context of their daily lives. They are focussed, concentrate well and are eager to complete tasks independently. They can discuss what they have learnt and show that they are reflective, not only in lessons, but generally. Progress is evident within lessons and over time as reflected in pupil workbooks. Pupils settle quickly to work and behaviour in class is exemplary.

An excellent Key Stage 2 lesson on the topic of 'The qualities of a committed person' saw outstanding development of vocabulary, strong cross curricular links, particularly with

literacy, through developing understanding of different types of questioning through 'hot seating'. The lesson built on research homework which asked pupils to identify a committed person and provide their rationalisation for the choice made. The teachers' excellent rapport with pupils created a secure learning environment in which pupils contributed enthusiastically very reflective answers. The lesson theme was well linked to scripture and the Baptism of Jesus. There was a good mix of teacher led input and pupil responses. Pupils made good use of bibles to research answers to their questions. The teacher reflected on her own life experiences making the lesson relate to pupils everyday lives.

A Key Stage 1 lesson was marked by excellent clear teaching in the whole class session concluding with a very prayerful liturgy. The group working with the class teacher reflected in depth on 'Signs and Symbols'. The Religious Education of the larger group undertaking independent work would have benefitted from being more focussed on the religious element of the task. Pupils articulated clearly an understanding of religious signs and symbols, for example, in making the Sign of the Cross they said, "God will always be with us" and "We are talking to God." The lesson was well differentiated as demonstrated by a range of questions targeted at pupils of differing abilities.

A further Key Stage 2 class undertook work on the parable of the Good Samaritan. It was well paced with a good range of activities to meet pupils' individual needs. The parable was well linked to Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and related to pupils lives today.

An early years' Religious Education lesson was linked to their current topic. It was notable that after such a short time in school the pupils were able to listen to each other and work cooperatively. Learning outcomes were clear and high level religious vocabulary was being developed, e.g. Psalm. There were good cross curricular links with ICT in the pupils' task to compose a psalm. The school could share this identified good practice.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

St Elizabeth's consider a daily Act of Collective Worship to be an essential element of school life and of the education in which they engage. Clear termly plans show the involvement of staff and children in leading and preparing whole school and phase acts of Collective Worship. There is a strong ethos that values opportunities to gather as a community to pray, listen, sing, share sadness and celebrate good news together to provide a supportive caring environment.

Assemblies are an integral part of Religious Education in school as they cover elements of the 'Liturgical Year' and also link closely to the 'Come and See' themes. They are also used to cover some of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) theme, forging close links between these themes and Christ's message of the way we should try to live our lives. Good use is made of the key 'reflection' and 'rejoicing' elements of the 'Come and See' programme by ensuring they are encountered as a whole community.

There is a strong programme of acts of worship including, whole school Masses, reconciliation services in Lent and Advent, a weekly hymn practice, whole school and key stage assemblies.

Focus points for prayer are well used incorporating candles, scripture, pictures, statues,

and other relevant artefacts. These are of good quality as are displays around the school which enhance teaching and learning.

St Elizabeth's is a very prayerful community with a wide range of prayer being experienced by pupils including those written and chosen by the pupils or teacher. In addition the traditional prayers of the church are well known. These prayer forms are all listened to or experienced orally. Each class has a class prayer book containing prayers that the pupils have written. These books move up with the class and may be added to, or prayers changed, as the class chooses. These books support class prayer times. Prayer and reflection are also a strong feature within Religious Education lessons. Pupils and staff also participate in a Friday Prayer Club and join the Rosary group.

Pupils are proud of their outside prayer garden which offers opportunities for quiet reflection and class based Acts of Worship.

The school has commenced a cycle of class-based Masses for the members of each class in Key Stage 2 and their families. This provides an opportunity for the pupils to celebrate Mass in an intimate environment and for the parish priest to talk to the children about the Eucharist, at their level.

Collective Worship is well documented and shows high levels of involvement of staff and pupils in leading and preparing whole school and phase Acts of Collective Worship.

A pupil commented saying, "We learn lots of different prayers which my cousin doesn't know". School council members said, "Our school says you can pray anywhere and God will listen. You can even pray in the library."

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