



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 137295**

**Corpus Christi**

**Trent Road**

**Brixton**

**SW2 5 BL**

**Inspection date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Chair of Governors: Miranda Sawyer**

**Co-Headteachers: Jean Connery**

**Robert Coyle**

**Inspectors: Hilary Blake**

**Eileen Watson**

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR

Tel 01689 829331

**Interim Director of Education: Angela Cox OBE**



### Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Corpus Christi is a two-form entry primary school and nursery in Brixton in the borough of Lambeth, serving the Catholic communities of Brixton Hill and its neighbouring parishes.

Pupils represent a wide range of minority ethnic groups, and the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is in the top quintile nationally at 49%. This diverse intake is united by faith – 99.75% of pupils are baptised Catholic, and families attend local parishes which include Corpus Christi, Saint Philip and St James Church and Saint Simon and Saint Jude Church.

The school has a high attendance rate (96.3%), low pupil mobility and a proud tradition of strong academic achievement; progress and attainment at the end of KS2 is either above or significantly above average nationally.

Corpus Christi is an active participant of the Lambeth Catholic Schools Partnership which consists of nine Catholic schools in the borough of Lambeth. The partnership promotes cohesion amongst Catholic leaders and staff to secure the values of Catholic education and share good practice through working party cluster groupings.



## **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS**

Corpus Christi is a good Catholic school because:

- The school provides a warm and welcoming community where staff are dedicated to ensuring the best possible provision for the pupils in their care.
- Pupils are proud of their school and have many opportunities to live their own lives to the full, whilst eagerly seeking positions of responsibility to serve their school, the local community and others beyond their locality. They contribute to liturgies, charitable fundraising and support younger pupils through the buddy scheme.
- Governors and leaders have a long association with the school and are invested in its continuing success. Strong links exist between parish, school and families which serve to further strengthen the Catholic identity and ethos of the school.

## **WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

- Lessons are designed to be engaging and pupil behaviour is consistently good. Focus now on increasing the pace of teaching and learning, modelling good outcomes and ensuring that all pupils understand the task and success criteria and that the more able are appropriately challenged.
- Celebrate more abundantly the school's Catholic identity through displays in shared areas, to reflect the liturgical season, the pupils' learning and the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Clearly identify the schedule for collective worship throughout the week and ensure that policy reflects practice. Be confident to build on the creative and engaging experience seen in the KS1 collective worship, to ensure pupils are engaged and actively involved in celebrating and understanding the gospel message.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	2
--	---

### Catholic Life

	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1

### Religious Education

	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	2

### Collective Worship

	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.	2
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	2



## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- Pupils are eager and proud to take a leading role in opportunities available to them which promote the school's Catholic life and mission both within school and in the wider community. They can explain the 'FAMILY' values: Faith, Aspiration, Motivation, Independence, Love, You are unique. They are motivated by the whole school focus on one value each term and they strive to put that value into action.
- Older pupils are enthusiastic in their roles as buddies to younger pupils. Pupils and parents speak positively of the friendships that exist across the year groups, fostered by the buddy system.
- Pupils say there is no bullying: 'It never happens but just in case, there is a worry box... there is a safe space'. If friendship problems occur, pupils know who to turn to for help and that their teachers will help them achieve reconciliation.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others in the local community and beyond their immediate locality. For example, a well-established relationship exists between school and the local Ace of Clubs, a homeless centre in Clapham. The club benefits from the school's fundraising activities and donations of food throughout the year. At Christmas, the school choir sings for residents in the local care home. Pupils initiated fundraising activities in support of Ukrainian refugees.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and confident in conversation. They enjoy school life and are proud to be part of Corpus Christi school. They take pride in their appearance and their environment, showing respect for themselves and for God's creation. Even the youngest children are involved through initiatives such as Little Buds and the Green Team.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. There are many responsibility posts and opportunities to serve in every key stage through initiatives such as class chaplains, school council, head boy and girl and their deputies. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- There is a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships that exist between colleagues including support staff, pupils and their families. Parents and carers highly value Catholic education and the integration they recognise between school and parish: '(the) school has amazing ties with the parish and priest which really adds value to both wider communities. A strong, kind and reflective ethos is encouraged and embedded in the life and work of the school, especially through its staff.'



- All staff promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect. The school inspires loyalty as evidenced by the witness of members of the staff team, many of whom are long serving and others who attended the school as pupils before returning to teaching roles.
- The mutually supportive relationship between school and parish in prioritising the Catholic life, is seen in the example of staff who are parishioners leading the sacramental preparation programme for pupils.
- Parents recognise and value the school's distinctive Catholic ethos: 'The teachers teach Catholic values not only through the curriculum but lead by example. They are very compassionate and care very much about the children's wellbeing.'

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- The development of the Catholic life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility. The co-headteachers, an assistant headteacher and the RE coordinator work closely with the chair of governors to ensure the school is active in fulfilling this responsibility.
- Diversity and inclusion are prioritised in the school improvement plan and seen by parents as a strength of the school. The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the benefit of all pupils. No child is disadvantaged through lack of uniform and equipment, as this is provided at the school's discretion for pupils in need. In an example of the positive relationship between school and parish, the St Vincent de Paul group ensures vulnerable families are well provided for at Christmas.
- Leaders, including the governing body, are highly ambitious for the Catholic life of the school. Governors show their support and monitor through school visits, dialogue with leaders and scrutiny of termly written reports (3 times per year).
- Leaders and governors ensure the school follows diocesan and national initiatives such as the revisions to the teaching of relationships, sex and health education; ensuring budgets are available to provide high quality resources; and that parents/carers are duly consulted and informed of curriculum content.
- The school has clear structures in place to ensure high levels of pastoral care to pupils and their families. A dedicated team has undertaken training in mental health first aid and the school is particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils who have suffered bereavement and loss.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of staff who acknowledge that wellbeing is prioritised by the leadership team. Staff also speak highly of the support and reassurance offered during the disruption and uncertainty of lockdown.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.**

- Pupils say they enjoy their religious education lessons. Behaviour in all the lessons observed was consistently good, meaning pupils can listen and concentrate well.
- Relative to their age and capacity, pupils make good progress in acquiring and expanding their religious vocabulary. In an Early Years class, pupils could recall some of the words of scripture when retelling the story of Jesus' 'temptation' in the desert. Like Jesus, they know they can say 'no!' when tempted.
- The youngest pupils are very actively involved in their learning which keeps them engaged. In the Early Years, staff planned a relevant range of exciting activities to ensure that the children's learning was sustained and vocabulary consolidated. All pupils were keen to participate in making crosses, creating stained glass windows on the lightbox, making a collaborative Easter garden and participating in role play.
- In upper Key Stage 2 pupils were able to draw on prior learning and reflect on the signs and symbols in a piece of art, interpreting from it the church's teaching on death and new life. Pupils' questions in the 'Wonder Bubble' revealed the depth of their personal reflections on serious matters of bereavement and loss: 'If we believe in life after death, why is it so sad.'
- Pupils' Lenten promises are displayed throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to recall their promises and work towards them. A common feature was helping others. In Key Stage 1 pupils promised to 'do something kind every day'. Their promises were personal and achievable: 'I will wear a big smile every day.'

### **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.**

- Religious education lessons are distinguished by a common format: the candle is lit 'to show Jesus is present' and spiritual music is played to establish a distinctive start to the lesson and create a prayerful atmosphere.
- Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods and creative ideas to appeal to pupils' different learning preferences. Some lessons would benefit from increased pace and clear modelling of success criteria. The best lessons are distinguished by clear learning intentions, pace and skilful questioning, where pupils are active in their learning.
- In a Key Stage 2 class, pupils had to arrange objects including palm leaves, stones, bread and a crown of thorns in the order they appear during Holy Week. This prompted much discussion and debate about the events of Holy Week, as the class teacher persistently used open questioning techniques to lead children to establish the sequence and connectedness of events.
- There is a strong emphasis on including scripture in lessons and making links between scripture and daily life which enables pupils to understand how their religious beliefs should direct the way they live and the choices they make.



- Parents value the holistic approach to teaching which is not restricted to the content of the curriculum: '(my child) often comes home telling me stories about Jesus or wider societal issues such as refugees seeking asylum. It all comes from the school.'

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.**

- Leaders and governors ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to religious education in each key stage, in accordance with the Bishops' directive.
- Provision of time and resources for professional development is fully supported by school leaders. This is reflected in the induction process for new staff, time for 'in-house' training provided by the subject leader and engaging with diocesan support and training.
- Subject monitoring is given a high priority. Meetings with the link governor are conducted 3 times per year (termly) to coincide with the provision of written reports on religious education, relationships, sex and health education and personal and social education. The subject leader consults annually with other Catholic schools in the partnership to moderate and validate teacher assessment judgements.
- The subject leader uses the results of annual monitoring and assessment to compile an action plan which feeds into the whole school development plan.
- As the school is fortunate to have a high number of Catholic teachers, leaders have taken the decision to support and strengthen the teaching of religious education by ensuring that in each year group at least one of the class teachers is Catholic. Joint planning ensures equality of experience for pupils across the year group.



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Pupils experience worship in different groups and settings. They assemble calmly, reflect in silence, join in community prayer and sing joyfully. They know the traditional prayers of the church and can also formulate personal prayers.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, the colours of the seasons and can name and describe feasts and holydays. Pupils recently participated in Ash Wednesday worship either in the parish church or, for the youngest pupils, in school, where they received the ashes.
- Pupils aspire to be class chaplains when they reach year 5. This role gives them the opportunity to lead prayer and worship in the classes they are assigned to and pass on skills and resources to the class prayer leaders.
- The Key Stage 1 Rejoice liturgy was indeed joyful as the pupils shared their learning, making links between scripture and their daily lives. It was an equally meaningful and engaging experience for the pupils leading the liturgy as it was for those attending.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Collective worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in almost all school activities and celebrations. Praying together is a familiar part of the pupils' daily experience.
- Collective worship opportunities are offered in a variety of settings and arrangements so that pupils can experience whole key stage and classroom worship.
- Together with the parish priest who is now the link governor for religious education, school leaders have re-established the calendar of school Masses and attendance of pupils at parish masses. Parents value the return to this full programme as they are able to join together with the school as part of a worshipful community.
- School leaders have invested in commercial resources to support teachers and pupils in leading liturgy. Whilst this is an attractive resource it is important to proclaim the Gospel from the Bible and be confident to adapt content to suit the setting and the context.



**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Leaders ensure that pupils experience the richness of the Church's liturgical year, including feast days and seasons, such as Harvest, Advent and Lent as well as marking the start of each term with school Mass.
- The recent appointment of the parish priest to the role of link governor further strengthens the provision and enriches the pupil experience.
- Governors are visible in their role as they join school assemblies, Masses and special liturgies to participate in collective worship and as part of their monitoring role.