



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

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

**URN Infants 1029927**

**Juniors 1029926**

**The Federation of St Elphege's  
Infant and Junior Catholic Schools**

**Mollison Drive  
Wallington  
Roundshaw  
Surrey  
SM6 9HY**

**Inspection date: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022**

**Chair of Governors: Tom Tamplin**

**Headteacher: Martin Jones**

**Inspectors: Hilary Blake  
Helen Frostick**

## **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

St Elphege's RC Infant School and St Elphege's RC Junior School federated in 2006. Through a shared mission of evangelisation and aspiration for children and young people, the schools are committed to working together. This includes collaboration at leadership and governance level and with teaching and support staff.

There are approximately 750 pupils on roll across the two schools with 19% of pupils eligible to receive the pupil premium grant. The Infant and Junior Schools host pupils from 16 out of 17 of the possible ethnic groups. The schools' deprivation factor is in the fifth quintile as identified by the Inspection Data Summary report (IDSR); many of the pupils come from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and at present there are 3 looked after children. The schools are clear in their Catholic mission to support all members of their community, including those who experience challenging circumstances, through their Pastoral Support Service.

The main parish is St Elphege's. The schools also welcome families from a number of other parishes; many of these families also choose to attend St. Elphege's RC Church.



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

The Federation of St Elphege's is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic life and ethos is the heartbeat of this school, directing every action for the benefit of all members of the community.
- From a diverse range of starting points pupils make good progress in their learning and grow into confident and articulate young people with a clear vision of their personal vocation and capability to achieve it.
- The prayer life of the school is inclusive and open to all members of the community, effectively connecting school, parents and parish.
- Leaders and managers are experienced and dedicated in their drive for excellence, always with the school's mission at the forefront of their plans.

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

- Develop pupil leadership of collective worship to include all year groups.
- Ensure consistency in the use of developmental marking across the school.
- Support the school parliament in their initiative to refurbish and reinstate the outdoor prayer garden.



## Overall Effectiveness

|                                                              |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education. | 1 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|

### 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

|                                                                                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
|                                                                                                     | 1 |
| How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.                            | 1 |
| The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.                            | 1 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. | 1 |

### Collective Worship

|                                                                                                    |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
|                                                                                                    | 1 |
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.                     | 1 |
| The quality of provision for Collective Worship.                                                   | 1 |
| How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship. | 1 |

## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

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

- Pupils are confident and proactive in their contribution to the Catholic life of the school. This is explicit in the children's version of the mission statement which spans all the schools in the federation.
- Pupils know that 'with God all things are possible', and the faith values, well. They describe the impact of these statements, which are displayed in all classrooms and shared spaces, as supporting good behaviour.
- Pupil voice is gathered through regular pupil conferencing with the religious education lead, the suggestion post box and the Year 6 school parliament. With the support of staff, the parliament works to implement new ideas and to develop existing provision, for example, through improving outdoor prayer areas, running charity events and influencing the increase in creative learning opportunities.
- All pupils, regardless of their faith background feel a strong sense of inclusion. They describe the school as being 'one family, where everyone is accepted, welcomed and respected'.
- Pupils are warm, welcoming and positive in their interactions with visitors and each other. They say there are scarcely any friendship issues. Pupils say they feel safe and know that teachers will help sort things out if problems occur.
- Charitable fundraising is often led by the pupils with their usual passion and enthusiasm. Proceeds are directed to a variety of charities including CAFOD.

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

- The school's mission statement, faith values and commitment to Catholic Social Teaching are at the heart of school life, clearly and repeatedly visible in the school's physical and online environments.
- All staff are familiar with the educational mission of the Church and make links to the statements in their lessons and liturgies.
- Everyone is invited to contribute to collective worship. Staff teach pupils worship songs from their own cultures which facilitates a feeling of inclusion for all members of the diverse school community.



- The sense of community is exceptional. There is genuine care, concern and a loving welcome for children and their families from the moment they arrive at school to be greeted by members of the pastoral and leadership teams. English language classes for parents and carers are offered in the familiarity of the school environment. Former parents are proud to return to school to tell staff of their children's progress and pay tribute to the foundations established at St Elphege's.
- The close partnership between parish and school contributes to ensuring families are fully supported and signposted to services as required.
- Displays and religious artefacts throughout the school reflect its Catholic character. Every classroom features an attractive prayer space appropriate to the liturgical season. Faith values are displayed in the school hall and are celebrated in the Friday stars assembly.
- Parents appreciate the compassion shown by staff and the time given to listen to their concerns and help them with any problems. Office staff, often the first point of contact, were praised for their sensitivity. In a very moving witness, parents and grandparents spoke of the dedication of all staff who truly 'bring the faith values to life.'

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

- Provision for Catholic Life is given the highest priority by school leaders and governors. A key priority of the School Improvement Plan for this academic year is that 'the community follows in Christ's footsteps to create a school where all respect the dignity of each person, work together so all are treated fairly and care for the world in which we live.'
- The evidence that leadership is successful in this aim is seen in the praise of parents for the school; the attitudes of pupils who respect each other and their environment and in every member of the staff who knows their voice is heard and valued.
- Induction for new members of staff is thorough, focusing on the needs of the individual. One member of staff spoke of her experience of transition into the English education system, 'I had to acquire a lot of new knowledge at the beginning of my journey into St Elphege's school life. Without the support from all members of staff, it would have been difficult to carry on my duties.'
- Governors were involved in the implementation of the new policy for RSE and revised curriculum. Training for staff was prioritised and appropriate consultation took place with parents.
- The SLT and the governor responsible for staff wellbeing regularly review staff workload to ensure expectations are purposeful and useful. Spreading tasks across the federation has also helped manage workload.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

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

- Almost all pupils, from their very varied starting points, make good progress in religious education with a significant number achieving greater depth.
- There is a focus on introducing and embedding religious vocabulary from the earliest years. Topic-specific vocabulary is displayed in all classrooms. Even the youngest pupils are introduced to challenging vocabulary such as 'sacrament' and 'crozier'. Chanting and singing make the acquisition of new vocabulary appealing and fun. Consequently, pupils develop a good level of religious literacy.
- Pupils are increasingly confident in interpreting Scripture and can articulate its application to their lives today. In a study of the Beatitudes, pupils were able to interpret being merciful as accepting each other's mistakes and forgiving someone.
- Behaviour is exceptional throughout the school. All pupils display good listening skills and are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussions. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to show their learning through creative tasks, such as making a poster to display gospel values or representing the sacraments through art.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of other faiths and cultures and value the opportunity to extend their learning through a range of activities in 'other faith weeks'.

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

- All teachers have good subject knowledge and are highly effective in planning and delivering high quality lessons which build on pupils' prior knowledge. They use probing questioning to challenge pupils in their understanding.
- To ensure consistency, all staff are supported through masterclasses, study days and staff meeting time to build their subject knowledge and teaching techniques.
- All lessons start with music and lighting the candle on the prayer focus, to create a calm and prayerful atmosphere, signalling and setting apart religious education as a special lesson.
- Pace in lessons is invariably good. Teachers communicate high expectations and passion for the learning they share. This can be infectious, as observed in some of the younger classes who were 'amazed' as their learning was revealed.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has full parity with other core subjects and is allocated the required 10% of curriculum time.
- Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of religious education reflects rigorous monitoring, analysis and a high degree of self-challenge. Analysis of attainment results is finely focused on a particular group of pupils with the aim that no child should be disadvantaged or experience barriers to progress due to lack of support and intervention. This results in carefully planned actions for further improvement, in this case to drive up attainment for vulnerable groups.
- Governors support the allocation of adequate non-contact time for the subject lead to fulfil her monitoring and support role.
- Working as part of a federation of schools is a strength both professionally and pastorally, as it provides opportunities for cross-school planning, professional development and moderation.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

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

- Pupils are skilled in planning and leading liturgies according to their age and capabilities. They prepare the prayer focus, write prayers, devise liturgical dance and sing beautifully in a variety of languages which reflect the diverse cultures that make up the school community. Pupils' calm and orderly behaviour contributes to an atmosphere of reverence as they gather for collective worship.
- In a Key Stage 2 pupil-led liturgy, pupils spoke in their own languages. Their bidding prayers were topical, for example, praying for those whose lives have been devastated by floods. Children are confident to share their prayers; their words come from the heart.
- The parish priest comments positively on the confidence of pupils who have become more active in participating in collective worship.

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

- Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It has a clear message and purpose and is planned in accordance with the liturgical season.
- Children's experience of liturgy, whether pupil-led or teacher-led, is at times challenging as they are asked what they can do to live the gospel message today. It can be a deeply moving and spiritual encounter.
- The creative arts, including music, are a strength of the school. Music gives shape to the structure of collective worship, signalling the start and conclusion. Pupils' singing is a highlight, often led by the infant or junior choir but always inclusive.
- Parents are welcomed to join school collective worship so that the whole community has regular opportunities to pray, reflect and celebrate together.
- Mass is celebrated regularly in the school. Pupils enjoy altar serving, reading, participating in the offertory procession and welcoming parents to the mass. The parish priest is a familiar figure in school. He welcomes and encourages the children's contribution to parish masses.



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

- School leaders including the subject lead are models of outstanding practice for all staff and pupils.
- The school is very well resourced with religious artefacts to enhance collective worship time and resources are allocated to staff training. Every space in the school celebrates the love of God.
- Through weekly monitoring, the subject lead and SLT ensure that a more creative spiritual approach, designed to deepen pupils' engagement, is now embedded across all key stages.
- Governors regularly attend collective worship, promoting its centrality to the life of the school and contributing to the planned schedule of evaluation and review.