



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection on behalf of the Archbishop of Thyateira
and Great Britain of denominational Education
under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

URN 138335

**St Cyprian's
Greek Orthodox Primary Academy School
Springfield Road
Thornton Heath
Surrey CR7 8DZ**

Inspection date: 29 June 2017

Chair of Governors:	Mr A Broadberry
Headteacher:	Mrs V Baron
Inspectors:	Mrs J Lenahan Ms A McWeeney

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy is a larger than average primary school with 453 pupils on roll. It is based in Croydon Local Authority. The school converted to academy status on the 1st July 2012. The directors promote the Greek Orthodox religion, language, culture, traditions and ethos. Pupils attend various local churches, with the main Greek Orthodox Church being St Constantine & St Helen in Upper Norwood.

Most pupils are Christian with 32% being of the Orthodox faith and a low percentage coming from other faith or no faith backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). The proportion of pupils supported through School Action is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEND) is also lower than the national average. The proportion of curriculum time allocated to teaching the Greek Orthodox faith is 5% in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Greek Orthodox Religious Education **GRADE 1**

The school's distinctively Greek Orthodox identity is at the centre of the life of the school. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She has a clear vision for the school, leads a dedicated senior leadership team and hard-working staff and is an excellent role model. In her vision and management she is strongly supported by a highly organised and committed governing body. The monitoring and evaluation of provision for the Greek Orthodox life of the school is outstanding.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to, and benefit from, the Greek Orthodox ethos of the school. They take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them, embracing the 'St Cyprian's Way' with enthusiasm. They are confident and have a strong pride in, and respect for, the Greek Orthodox identity of their school. As a result, their behaviour is exemplary; they exude a joy of learning and attain high levels of success academically.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The group of parents interviewed during the inspection represented all faith backgrounds in the school, and cited how much they valued that their children were receiving:

- "balanced education",
- "given a strong moral compass",
- "foundations laid in developing spirituality and religious knowledge",
- "a bonus to belong to a school with a Christian vision."

The involvement of priests in school life is outstanding across the Greek Orthodox life of the school and Religious Education, with excellent impact on pupils.

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. The opportunities provided are outstanding in range and quality and are in line with Greek Orthodox teaching. The pupils respond well.

The school is sensitive to the needs and perceptions of pupils of other denominations, faiths and cultures. They are able to play their full part in the life of the school.

The issue raised in the previous inspection (2011) is addressed in that the school has adopted a new Religious Education syllabus. However, it is not embedded and further planning is required to review and cross-reference yearly schemes for each age group in tandem with making relevant adjustments to assessment procedures for Religious Education.

Provision to teach pupils about the major world faiths needs to be taught at greater depth.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Review curriculum planning for each year group so that the adopted 'Pistevo' syllabus is cross-referenced with the key aspects of the Greek Orthodox liturgical calendar and the lives of the key saints.

- Further develop assessment criteria and procedures, incorporating a school portfolio of pupils' levels of attainment in Religious Education
- Establish the programme to teach pupils about the major world faiths in a more systematic and progressive manner.

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

The Greek Orthodox nature of the school is welcoming and evident through the entrance, chapel, high quality displays, icons, prayer focal areas and works of art. The whole ambiance is carefully orchestrated in a purposeful and child-friendly manner so that pupils benefit from their learning environment. The pupils fully embrace the St Cyprian's Way of loving, caring and looking after each other and their community. The pupils' adherence to these tenets is a contributory factor to the harmonious atmosphere and exemplary behaviour and respect that is evident throughout. Close links exist between the school, local church and the wider Greek Orthodox community, which ensures that pupils benefit by being actively involved in the practice of the faith.

Community cohesion is strong, as pupils benefit from a range of experiences, such as links with community groups and local residents, participating in 'St John's Chrysostom Oracy Festival' and Year 5 pupils engaging with Islamic pupils from Gatton Islamic School in Tooting. Pupils benefit from being afforded first-hand experience in learning about and supporting the disadvantaged in society through opportunities to engage in fundraising for charitable causes.

Pupils are very proud of their school and cite that "life at St Cyprian's is great because we all get along and care about one another." Members of the School Council take a role in promoting responsible attitudes and behaviour. Leadership skills are further developed by Team Captains from Year 6 who lead assemblies and support the members of House Teams. Empowering pupils in these ways enhances pupils' achievement and behaviour, following the school's mission.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Given their starting off points the pupils' standards of achievement and knowledge about the Greek Orthodox faith is outstanding and in line with attainment in literacy by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils readily identify with the school's mission and know that "I am strong through Jesus Christ." Pupils enjoy their lessons, and their behaviour in class is exemplary. Pupils observed displayed a thirst for learning, were attentive and approached tasks with confidence. This was evident when Year 5 pupils looked up Bible references to learn about the lives of Saints Peter and Paul, working co-operatively with enthusiasm and focus and responding in a mature manner to the teacher's questions. Scrutiny of pupils' books demonstrates that they take pride in their work and view the subject as special. Evidence from recent questionnaires indicates that pupils (97%) enjoy their Religious Education lessons.

Aspects of the Greek Orthodox life of the school such as their 'House' assemblies where pupils learn about the lives of the patron saints of all four churches under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese serve to make a seamless link with the curriculum.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect during acts of Collective Worship and view prayer as an integral aspect of school life. Knowledge of the formal prayers of the church is strong. The whole school assembly observed during the inspection was a genuinely powerful liturgical experience as the pupils from the earliest age participated in a reverential manner. Chanting and music added greatly to the prayerful experience. Prayer focal areas in classrooms are of an exceptionally high standard and serve as points for reflection. Pupils are fully aware of the significance of distinct icons, which are actively used throughout the school, as they enable them to experience their faith through visual and kinaesthetic means. Pupils are at ease when praying and no pupils is expected to worship in a manner that is contrary to his or her faith background. Pupils of all ages can relate to the power and purpose of evoking personal intercessions. This is evident in the many thoughtful prayers the pupils have written on scrolls in class prayer boxes.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Greek Orthodox life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

The leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and leadership team is outstanding as they are focussed on the school's mission. A shared sense of purpose pervades. The headteacher leads by example, demonstrating deep concern for the pupils and leads her team with vigour and enthusiasm, focusing on the fullest personal development of each pupil. Well planned policies and systems for pastoral care, spiritual, moral, cultural, social and academic development are all entwined under the auspices of the school's unique Greek Orthodox identity. Governors share a unified vision with leaders and managers. They are well informed, act as critical friends and, through their monitoring role, utilising their expertise and demonstrating their commitment, they ensure that the school is thriving both academically and from a religious perspective.

High aspirations are the driving force behind the high standards achieved by pupils. Regular monitoring and self-evaluation of policies and procedures ensures that leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. When issues arise, they are prioritised and action taken. Parents are kept very well informed about what is happening in the school through very effective channels of communication, including the informative school website.

Highly efficient use is made of resources, including links with the Church of Saint Constantine & St Helen and local Greek community, together with support from the four parishes within the Archdiocese of Thyateira. All these links serve to enhance provision at St Cyprian's.

The central location of the chapel reflects the style of decoration to be found within a Greek Orthodox chapel and its presence at the heart of the school reinforces the strong roots of the Greek Orthodox faith within the school.

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 a core subject. There is a seamless link between the teaching of the subject and the Greek Orthodox life of the school.

The professional development of personnel at all levels is given due prominence. All new members of staff participate in an induction programme. In the current year teaching staff received specialist training from the local priest in Greek Orthodox teaching on Baptism, Easter, Christmas, Holy Week, St Cyprian and the lives of St Peter and St Paul. The subject leader is closely supported by the Religious Education team, which consists of the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers. Together they lead in-house training on a regular basis. This year the focus has been on assessment, levelling and moderation. The school also avails of expertise from the Archdiocese of Southwark to augment their skills in delivering the Religious Education programme.

The 'link governor' for Religious Education is actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies and brings a wealth of support and guidance to the school. Since the previous inspection the Greek Orthodox 'Pistevo' syllabus has been introduced. However, scrutiny of teachers plans and pupils' workbooks reveals that this syllabus is not, as yet, cross-referenced with the current scheme where the focus is based on key events in the liturgical calendar and the lives of key saints. Leaders are aware that this needs to be addressed. When the new syllabus is reviewed, the school's assessment procedures need to be adjusted so that they are a more up-to-date diagnostic tool to analyse pupils' progress and levels of attainment.

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

Four lessons were observed during the inspection. There was also a comprehensive book scrutiny. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some outstanding elements. Differentiated planning and challenging tasks were key elements in the lessons observed by inspectors. More emphasis on key words, pace and incorporating time for pupils to reflect on learning at the end of lessons would serve to raise standards even higher. Pupils with special needs are well supported in their learning with classroom support providing discreet help that has an impact on their learning and progress. The school's marking policy needs to be further embedded and monitored with good practice shared. Marking of pupils work is affirmative in the main and needs to be improved so that the good practice as seen in a few classes is consistent throughout. Pupils also need to become engaged with their understanding of 'next steps' in the learning process and what they must do to improve.

Exemplary workbooks were seen in a Year 5 class where there is more depth and pupil engagement with topics and this good practice needs to be shared throughout the school. Teachers use questioning skills effectively to extend pupils' understanding of the learning focus and build successfully on previous learning. There is evidence of regular assessment of pupil's work with termly formal assessments. However, inspectors found it difficult to match curriculum plans with assessment procedures and criteria and also how the collated data measured progressive levels of attainment. In this regard, the school needs to cross-reference the 'Pistevo' scheme with the planned programme as it is being taught currently and subsequently compile a school portfolio of pupils' assessed work in order to have a more accurate tool by which to measure pupils' levels of attainment in Religious Education.

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

The curriculum is focused on the key events in the Liturgical Calendar, the life of Jesus and supplemented by pupils studying the lives of key saints and key feast days in the Greek Orthodox faith. All pupils belong to one of four teams linked to the four local Greek Orthodox churches and learning about the lives of their key saints is incorporated into the curriculum. Although the newly adopted 'Pistevo' scheme has a broad progressive programme for each year group, scrutiny of the pupils' books and the school's curriculum planning reveals that the scheme is not integrated into termly plans. This needs to be addressed if pupils are to receive a more balanced curriculum.

The time-table allocation of two hours per week is divided between Religious Education and teaching the Greek language, culture and traditions. This devoted time means that there is a shortfall in the allocation given to pupils to study the Religious Education curriculum in depth.

The curriculum is enriched in a myriad of ways such as pupils learning about Greek art and traditions, field trips for Year 6 pupils to Cyprus to immerse them in its culture and links with the wider Greek Orthodox community. High quality icons are used very effectively by teachers to promote pupils' understanding of the life of Jesus and the Saints. Cross-curricular links such as drama, art, dance and music enhance provision. Teachers need to be prudent in their use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in lessons and ensure that, when used, it enhances rather than detracts from the learning focus.

The provision to teach the pupils about the major world faiths curriculum falls short of expectation in depth, resources and progression. The school needs to adopt a more systematic approach to address this shortfall. The Sex and Relationships Education programme is delivered effectively using the 'All that I am' scheme of work with due consideration given to the views of parents on its content. The Religious Education curriculum and enrichment programmes serve to enhance the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship is central to the daily life of the school and a key aspect of the pupils' daily life. Pupils are offered a broad range of opportunities that offer a rich and positive liturgical experience so that they can deepen their relationship with God through prayer and reflection. The Archbishop blesses the pupils and staff at the beginning of each school year. On dedicated Greek Orthodox feast days and special events in the school calendar, the local priests perform special liturgies for the pupils. One such celebration to commemorate the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul was witnessed during the inspection when the pupils assembled in a responsive and focused manner and participated in the manner which is expected in the Greek Orthodox church. The chapel is at the heart of the school and offers pupils a quiet haven in which to reflect and pray. Thoughtfully dedicated prayer areas in classrooms together with high quality icons strategically placed throughout the school all serve to enhance the pupils' spiritual development. Close links with the Greek Orthodox parishes and on-going support from the local priests enhance the quality of the prayer life of the school and their support is greatly appreciated by leaders, staff, parents and pupils.