



Diocese of Westminster

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School

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DFE Number: 204 / 3371

URN Number: 100264

Headteacher: Headteacher: Mr S. Flood

Chair of Governors: Mr D. Vitali

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 7th March 2013

Date of previous inspection: 14th May 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspector spent one day in school, visited 8 lessons and one assembly, and carried out 4 interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of Our Lady and St Joseph, Dalston was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Description of School

The school is a one form entry in the LA of Hackney and the locality of Dalston. The school serves the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph; Kingsland. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 1% and from other Faiths 0%.

There are 239 pupils on roll, with 7 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is an average rate of families claiming free school meals.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1: Outstanding;*
Grade 1: Very Good;
Grade 2: Good;
Grade 3: Requires improvement;
Grade 4: Causing Concern.

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade: [1*]

The overall effectiveness of religious education is outstanding. Pupils are gaining religious literacy at an excellent rate throughout the school. They are becoming very aware of how their Catholic faith affects their daily living. Teaching is outstanding evidenced by powerful delivery which very effectively inspires pupils' interest and promotes excellent RE learning. The very experienced headteacher drives and empowers further improvements by his constant evaluations of present practice and by striving to use innovative and dynamic ideas, resources and technologies to continue to develop the teaching performance of staff and the RE learning of pupils. All pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when discussing their own ideas and opinions and when undertaking imaginative and practical activities to consolidate their learning. Pupils display a growing depth of thought which impacts outstandingly on their spiritual and moral development. The inspector concurs with the school's self-evaluation judgements.

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?

The last inspection issues have been fully achieved. To further improve in curriculum religious education the school has identified the following area and the inspector concurs with this:

To embed the new RE curriculum and the use of the new style of pupil targets to inform future lesson planning so that all pupils continue to achieve their full religious literacy potential.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade [1*]

The content of religious education meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and is systematically linked with Westminster's new understandings of the national attainment targets. This ensures greater learning challenge within the RE curriculum. At present the school is integrating two programmes to achieve a thorough and comprehensive curriculum that both promotes a knowledge of Catholic faith and teaches the relationship between Catholic beliefs and the pupils' own life and experiences. Resources are used creatively to motivate pupils' interest for example in the Year 3 class a full and empty sponge was used to help demonstrate pupils' feelings before and after their First Confession. The school has developed strong links with people of other faiths to enrich this aspect of the curriculum.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade [1]

Pupils achieve very well especially in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils understand their targets and actively seek to make progress through ownership of their learning. Pupils' RE data is exceptionally well recorded and analysed and this identifies any underachievement. Strong and supportive action is taken to remedy this. The data evidences a high level of religious literacy among all different groups of pupils. The Early Years' Co-ordinator is devising new Levels of Understanding for the youngest children. Teachers' planning indicates high expectations and challenge for all pupils

to extend their learning to achieve a higher level. Pupils work steadily and with interest. RE books are well-presented and a full coverage of the curriculum is evidenced.

The quality of teaching

Grade [I*]

Teaching is outstanding evidenced by powerful delivery which very effectively inspires pupils' interest and promotes excellent RE learning. All teachers display excellent subject knowledge and are supported by skilled assistants. They used dynamic visual material, open and challenging questioning, and Scripture very effectively to engage pupils' interest and enhance learning. Older children are encouraged to link three sources of revelation which powerfully enriches pupils' understanding. This was evidenced in Year 6 when the Franciscans' interpretation of the second Station of the Cross was related to Jesus' experience in the wilderness and to the news item of homeless Billy Ray who returned a diamond ring. Tasks often have creative links with other curriculum subjects for example Art, Drama, the extensive use of ICT, and Literacy, effectively evidenced by an animal story used to demonstrate how an act of kindness can change the character of the receiver. Pupils were fully engaged during lessons and their behaviour is excellent. Marking and constructive feedback is thorough with appropriate praise and enables pupils to improve their work. Assessments are moderated at school and deanery level and samples used in diocesan training.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [I*]

The quality of the leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. The RE leadership team, which includes the headteacher, two RE subject leaders, a parish link person and a community worker, has a clear vision and commendable commitment to promoting high quality religious education. Two teachers hold the CCRS (Catholic certificate of Religious Studies). The RE team work successfully to monitor, guide and support teaching, encouraging the staff to improve their skills to very good effect.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade: [1*]

This is an outstanding Catholic school. The committed leadership of the headteacher is instrumental in very effectively maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity; in inspiring and empowering staff to fully fulfil their role; and in powerfully fostering pupils' growing awareness of their Catholic faith and their understanding of how to live this out in their lives. Prayer, worship and sacramental celebration have a strong central role in school. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes. Pupils say "God definitely is with us here". The Catholic ethos is tangible within the school and demonstrated by the warm welcome of staff and many attractive Catholic displays such as the new large icon of Jesus made by the pupils. Governors offer strong support in developing and reviewing the quality of religious education. Relationships and care for each other within the school community are outstanding as are the commendable links the school has established with local, diocesan and global Catholic communities.

What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school ?

There were no development issues in the last inspection report. To further improve the school's Catholic life the school should:

Provide more opportunities for pupils to plan and present their own acts of worship.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade [1*]

Religious education is of paramount importance in the school evidenced by the subject receiving at least 10% of curriculum time; by its substantial and generous budget which often exceeds that of other core subjects; by the high priority given to training which is varied and extensive; by the central placing in each classroom of attractive and high quality RE displays; and by the powerful influence the RE curriculum has on all aspects of the school's daily life. Governors offer strong support in reviewing the quality of religious education. Pupils are very aware of the importance of religious education and view it as the most important subject in the school saying "what we learn will help us all through life".

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community.

Grade [1*]

Worship and prayer are central in the school's life and make an outstanding impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils say "prayer really helps if you are anxious". The school creatively and sensitively makes worship accessible to all by promoting prayer and liturgy led by

pupils in their own language and by the signing of the words whilst singing. Pupils' liturgical formation is extremely well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. The worship observed very effectively used visual presentation and artefacts to convey the scripture parable message. During worship pupils show deep reverence and respect and the very high quality of their singing powerfully enriches the experience. Mass is regularly celebrated at church and at school. The number of parents attending has increased due to school combining this service with the invitation to visit their child's classroom. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the liturgical life of the school.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.

Grade [I*]

The school's commitment to action for social justice is outstanding and staff have a performance management target related to this. Awareness of the Common Good locally and globally has powerfully enhanced the pupils' RE learning and the school has achieved UNICEF Rights and Responsibilities School Award. Pupils understand extremely well that a vital part of their Catholic faith is reaching out to help all others both in the school, the community and globally. Pupils organise fund-raising for many diverse charities which are decided upon by individual pupils and the School Council. The school has taken the lead on sustainable development projects from SE Asia to Africa. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and enthusiastically undertake a variety of responsibilities such as assisting younger pupils. They say "We follow Jesus' example by doing planned as well as random acts of love to others". Relationships and pupils' pastoral care within the school community are outstanding. Ethics of the market place and moral issues are regularly discussed as exemplified by the outstanding work the older pupils have done relating to Fairtrade. Staff from the school are very generous with their support and help to other teachers in neighbouring schools.

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf;

Grade [I*]

Partnership is a key, vibrant and central part of the school's understanding of its mission within the immediate and wider community. The school has outstanding links with parents who are extremely supportive. Parents greatly value the contribution the school makes to the faith development of their children. This is borne out through both the high return (83%) of parental questionnaires and also the very high number of parents (92%) who agree and strongly agree with all aspects of the school's RE and Catholic provision. The school works in very close partnership with the diocese and responds fully when their help and expertise is sought. The school has extremely strong links with the parish and has built valuable connections with local Catholic communities from other cultures. The headteacher gives strong support in many and varied ways to other schools in the deanery.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

Grade [I*]

The leadership of the school's Catholic life is outstanding, and has a clear powerful vision to maintain its outstanding effectiveness and to promote further development of practical expressions of its Catholic life. The school is committed to ensuring that its Catholic dimension pervades every aspect of the school and to leading pupils to excellence education and fullness of life. Inclusion of all is a high priority in the school. Governors are fully committed to the school's Catholic identity and understand their strategic role. The school seeks the views of all stakeholders including pupils as one factor in its monitoring and evaluation. The recent formation of a RE leadership team to increase diversity of input and range of expertise will ensure the training and sustainability of future Catholic leadership.

