



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

Cardinal Pole Catholic School

Kenworthy Road, London E9 5RB

Telephone: 020 8985 5150

e-mail address: enquiries@cardinalpole.co.uk

DCSF Number: 204/4719

URN Number: 100285

Headteacher: Ms K Hartigan

Acting Chair of Governors: Father D Evans

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: 17th May 2011
Date of previous inspection: 9th January 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs J Goring

Description of School

Cardinal Pole Catholic School is a split site, inner city, mixed 11-19 Catholic comprehensive school. There are approximately 1008 pupils on roll, 128 of whom are in the Sixth Form. It is situated in the Diocese of Westminster in the London Borough of Hackney. 45% of the pupils are Catholic, 43% other Christian denominations and 12% other faiths. There are 75 teachers of whom 35% are Catholic. 5 teachers have the CCRS (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies) and a further 2 have a Catholic qualification. Cardinal Pole has had a Science specialism since 2005. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (38%) is above the national average. 88% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group is pupils of Black or Black African origin (44%). The percentage of pupils who speak a language other than English at home is 50%; Portuguese is the predominant other language, followed by Spanish. 20% of the pupils are identified as having Special Educational Needs, including 2.2% with statements. Pupils' prior attainment on entry is lower than that of the national average. Most pupils come from within Hackney and social deprivation indicators show that the school is placed in one of the most deprived areas in the country.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Cardinal Pole School is a good Catholic school. The Catholic life of the school benefits from the clear vision of the Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body; this results in an effective Catholic community which serves pupils, parents and staff well. There is a culture where every pupil is expected to fulfil their potential. This leads to a clear strategy for improving teaching and learning, coherence within the departments and good pastoral care. Pupils enjoy being at the school and enjoy being part of this community – they feel they will succeed and recognise the efforts the school goes to help them to grow spiritually and be prepared for adult life. There is a strong sense of mutual respect across the whole community. Behaviour is good on the whole and pupils are given every opportunity to exercise self-discipline. Pupils are enthusiastic in their enjoyment of religious education lessons and in playing their part in the wider world – both in the local and international communities. Prayer and liturgy are central to the school ethos and pupils appreciate the opportunities offered for prayer and worship. They are comfortable with their own faith and are happy to share their faiths with each other. The religious education department works as a cohesive group which has a deep desire to do the best for their pupils

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Progress since the last inspection has been good. The department has good systems in place now to share good practice. Transition from Key Stage 2 has improved, with taster days being offered to Year 5 pupils and there are post-offer interviews for the pupils and their parents. However, the number of Catholic pupils is declining which the school is beginning to address. The liturgy group now benefits from participation from staff from a number of departments and there is also pupil participation as required.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

There is good capacity for the school to improve and develop further. The leadership team has a clear vision, both at whole school and departmental level. School self evaluation reveals an accurate picture of the strengths of the school and strategies to further develop the school. There is openness amongst the leadership team leading to a lack of complacency and desire for school improvement.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain the drive to improve attainment at Key Stage 3 and in the middle band pupils at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that Assessment for Learning is fully embedded and that all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Embed a wider variety of prayer experiences, including those in lessons, and encourage further pupil participation in liturgy.
- Improve the recruitment of Catholic pupils by deepening the relationships with the Catholic feeder primaries and developing further relationships with the local community.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The sense of common purpose in the school stems from the clear vision of leadership at all levels. The effective leadership of the senior team ensures that the school's Catholic ethos is evident. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles in strategy, accountability and as a critical friend. They are involved in the life of the school; they have a clear idea of what a Catholic school should be like and ensure the leadership team make it happen. The leadership of the school has been strongly focussed on raising standards and promoting the personal development of all learners. All the staff at the school promote high quality pastoral care and effective discipline; they encourage an aspirational ethos and a strong feeling of respect for others and for the environment. The pupils value the caring attitude of the staff, who support them with their difficulties and challenges. Resources are well managed. There is continuous striving to improve further. The pupils feel safe at Cardinal Pole and enjoy their learning – so they flourish.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer life and collective worship are clearly at the heart of the school. There are regular acts of worship, including morning prayer, regular year group Masses and whole school Masses where pupils' participation is encouraged and they respond with appreciation and respect. There are assemblies and prayer in tutor time every day. Opportunities for more imaginative prayer and for greater pupil participation, both in the liturgy and in the planning, are sometimes missed. This should be an area for development. There are annual retreats for the pupils and other

opportunities for reflection are encouraged. Pupils appreciate these occasions to develop their spirituality. Approximately half the pupils are Catholic and the majority of the rest are Christian. This is an inclusive community and those of other Christian denominations play a significant part in the prayer life of the school; all pupils feel comfortable in sharing their faith and this is a very powerful message.

Grade 2

How effectively does the school /college promote community cohesion?

Cardinal Pole is an inclusive and welcoming school. All who work there share the vision that everyone is equal whatever their background and the pupils enjoy celebrating the richness and diversity of the community. The school works very hard to ensure that there is a common sense of belonging. Pupils from multicultural backgrounds are recognised and valued and every opportunity is taken to encourage mutual respect. Friendships develop across ethnic and cultural groups. Pupils express interest and enjoyment in sharing their differences, knowing that this will lead to tolerance and greater empathy with others, which will be of great value in their later lives. The school works closely with local charities, raising money for Providence Row, a local homeless charity and for St Joseph's Hospice. There are also significant wider partnerships, for instance with London Citizens, where students are working hard to raise awareness for social justice in their community. There are links with schools in South Africa and in Bethlehem. The pupils have an appreciation of how fortunate they are and a desire to help others less fortunate, which is most impressive. They are keen and responsive to both local and global situations and want to put their faith into action.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

There is improving attainment at Key Stage 4 over the last three years which tracking data indicates will continue. The introduction of GCSE Philosophy and Ethics has been a success enabling pupils to achieve at the highest grades. At Key Stage 3, attainment is good at Level 6+ but attainment at Level 5+ is not as good, in comparison with English. A Level attainment is very good. Pupil tracking is well developed and enables underachievement to be identified early and intervention to be put in place so these improvements are set to continue. Most learners make progress, gaining knowledge and understanding at all Key Stages; positive attitudes to learning were seen across the school. Many pupils welcome opportunities to extend and deepen their religious learning, are confident in their use of specialist vocabulary, and demonstrate good religious literacy. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and take pride in their work. They are happy to engage in whatever is being asked of them – whole class discussion, group and independent work. They do think ethically and theologically and are open to listening to the beliefs of others.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Learners make good progress and demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Specialist teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, and high

expectations of pupils. The non-specialist teachers are supported effectively with well-structured schemes of work and especially by their colleagues in the department. There is good use of praise and affirmation of students. Behaviour is generally well managed and allows effective learning to take place. There is evidence of challenge and of opportunities for independent learning which are grasped by the pupils. Some use is made of ICT and a range of learning activities were observed. There is some evidence of differentiation seen in the lessons. Assessment is regular, although there was little evidence of diagnostic marking. However, in conversations with pupils, most were able to articulate what they needed to do to move on to the next stage. In the best lessons, pace and challenge were good, pupils were motivated and are happy to participate fully in lessons. Pupils said 'RE lessons are enjoyable' and that their teachers were always happy to give them extra help. There was mutual respect and the high quality relationships mean that the pupils were happy to say what they really felt, they were secure in discussion.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The curriculum just falls short of the Diocese recommendation of 10% curriculum time. It reflects the needs and aspirations of the pupils, and specialist teachers have a good understanding of and a passion for the subject. The department is well organised, well resourced and there is a feeling of coherence across the department. The curriculum reflects a variety of styles of learning and so creates opportunities for pupils to succeed. There is a tracking system to identify underachievement. Pupils appreciate the rewards and praise which they find motivational. Pupils are encouraged to question, discuss and present arguments in the knowledge that their ideas will be accepted and supportively challenged. Pupils spoken to during the inspection have a good understanding of the moral issues and are happy to think about ways of engaging with their communities; they can see the links with spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements across the curriculum. A review of the schemes of work at Year 7 and 8 will ensure that those pupils who do not come from Catholic primary schools have a better foundation in Catholic teaching and so improve progression between the Key Stages. In the Sixth Form, the accredited course in General Religious Education is very popular with students. The curriculum is well organised with coherent schemes of work providing clear objectives and the appropriate resources to be used. In addition, the school has engaged the services of the Catholic Association for Racial Justice to work with the pupils, building their self esteem and confidence and so setting the foundation for better engagement and achievement.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Leadership at all levels has a clear vision for the department and there is a coherent team who share this vision. Relationships between members of the department are strong and supportive. Resources are well deployed and the subject leader is effective in making the resource needs for departmental development available. There is a strong focus on improving standards and the department will take every opportunity to increase attainment, as evidenced by focussed intervention strategies. There is a culture of sharing ideas and practices which ensures consistency across the department, and a collegiate approach which pupils recognise to be a strength of the department. Expectations of both staff and pupils are high and there is a strong drive to further improve progress and achievement. Accommodation is adequate for purpose, given the plans for moving into the new school buildings in 2012; the learning environment is good with lively displays and use of ICT.

Grade 2