



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

Boadicea Street, Kings Cross, London N1 0UF
Telephone: 020 7278 7477

DfE Number: 206 3643
URN Number: 100451

Headteacher: Mrs N Flatley
Chair of Governors: Mr M Lebbie

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: 2nd July 2010
Date of previous inspection: 28 February 2007

Reporting Inspector: Mrs S Nolan

Description of School

Blessed Sacrament Primary is a mixed one-form entry school that includes full-time Nursery provision for 26 children. There are 25 children in the Reception class. The school mainly serves families from the local parish of the same name and there are strong links with the parish church. Of the 193 pupils on roll, 92% are baptised Catholic. Of the 13 full and part-time teachers, 66% (7) are Catholics and 3 hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) or other Catholic qualifications. The school's mission statement guides its ethos of promoting dignity and respect for the individual and of nourishing a strong sense of community. A high proportion of the pupils attending the school have a home language other than English, and approximately a third are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of the school population with significant barriers to learning is much higher than usual. The school has identified 82 pupils as having special educational needs. Five have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of the pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above average. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is generally below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Blessed Sacrament is an outstanding Catholic school. It strives successfully to include each individual and to make every child feel valued in accord with its mission statement. The headteacher, together with senior leaders, promote effectively high expectations for staff and pupils alike to ensure that pupils have the best opportunities for future success. There are very close links with the local parish and the school does its best to involve parents in its daily work. In this way, Blessed Sacrament School strives to integrate its day-to-day work with the Church's wider mission. Standards overall, although average, are improving in Religious Education and are similar to those of English. Pupils achieve well because they enjoy their work in Religious Education classes where teaching is good overall. Religious Education is very well planned within the overall excellent curriculum. Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school so that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Pupils behave well and really appreciate the school's warm family atmosphere. They have a sound understanding of the Church's mission at home and abroad through their support for a number of charities, including that for national charities and overseas projects such as the Haiti appeal. The school is very well led by the headteacher, senior team and governors who are fully dedicated to nurturing and developing this growing Catholic community. The senior team has a very accurate evaluation of the next steps for improvement and recognises that there is still work to be done to improve classroom practice and recruit, where possible, more Catholic teaching staff.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Blessed Sacrament has made very good progress since the last inspection in addressing the areas for improvement. Teachers have had training on the use of levels of attainment in Religious Education and are increasingly confident in their understanding of the strands. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of how teachers apply the levels of attainment following each topic. Pupils' progress is now tracked alongside that for English. Most marking of pupils' work demonstrates good practice in creating a dialogue with pupils that is much appreciated. There are many and various opportunities for the pupils to compose their own prayers other than in formal liturgical or school events. The Rosary Club in the Peace Garden, for example, is

popular. Work is in hand to provide pupils of all levels of attainment with sufficient challenge as are efforts to improve practice. Other positive developments include an improving trend in the pupils' attainment in Religious Education that matches the pattern in English, and the greater involvement of parents, for example, through their contributions to the school's book of prayers from around the world.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school has demonstrated its strong capacity to improve further through its progress since the last inspection. The dedication of its Catholic teachers, the commitment of its non-catholic staff to support the school's ethos, and the close links with the local parish all underpin its current drive for improvement. The curriculum leader for Religious Education, currently a deputy headteacher, is striving to further all aspects of the school's Catholic practice. The Religious Education provision is reviewed regularly as part of the school's on-going self-evaluation. There is clear evidence of sustained efforts to raise and maintain the quality of teaching and to pursue strategies to widen even further the pupils' understanding of how to improve their work through well-considered marking. This has led to robust procedures through which individual pupil's progress and understanding of the Catholic Faith is tracked and recorded. There are many and more varied opportunities for prayer than at the time of the last inspection. The school has a generally accurate understanding of what it needs to do to further improve its provision for its community. Not least it recognises that the further development of teachers' classroom practice is a priority.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Intensify efforts to recruit more Catholic teachers to the staff.
 - Take forward plans to involve other year groups as well as Year 6 in retreat days.
 - Continue to develop teachers' classroom practice in Religious Education so that it consistently meets as fully as possible the needs of individual pupils.
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The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Blessed Sacrament School is very well led and managed. The headteacher's determined leadership of this Catholic community is ably supported by the senior leadership team and governors. There is a clearly shared sense of commitment to promote the Catholic identity of the school that extends beyond classrooms to links with homes and the parish. The parish priest regularly celebrates mass for staff, pupils and parents and is involved in other whole-school liturgies. Regular monitoring and honest self-evaluation underpin the school's improvement since the last inspection. Lines of accountability are clear and the school has a very accurate understanding of the impact of its provision for the advancement of this Catholic community. It knows its strengths and areas for improvement very well and is working on refining its practice even further. As a result, the school provides high quality care and a good

education for all groups of children. Close contact with the parish helps the school to keep in touch with families within the community, including those that are hard to reach.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer and worship are at the core of the life of the school. The Church's liturgical cycle is well integrated into its daily work. The provision for prayer life, liturgy and collective worship is outstanding. Pupils are fully involved in reflections on the mission statement, in formal and informal daily prayer and in the planning of class and school masses. They participate enthusiastically in assemblies through reading, singing and music. The prayer tables in each classroom reflect the colours of the season and are an increasingly positive focus for pupils to recall the theme of the week. The whole school assembly on the theme of 'treasures' allowed the children to act out what they considered really important in life. The school environment is well enhanced by art work and other religious artefacts, including Our Lady's statue, the Blessed Sacrament motif on the stairs and the crucifix at each classroom door. Display in classrooms and around the corridors along with interesting resources on the prayer and reflection tables provide pupils with stimuli for thought. There is a calm and peaceful ethos throughout the school which is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour and consideration for others. The school is ready to take a further step and involve appropriate year groups as well as Year 6 in day retreats.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

The school is determined to include all pupils and their families and to contribute as fully as possible to supporting cohesion in its local community. Pupils have good opportunities to enhance their knowledge of other faiths through, for example, the study of Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. There have been many opportunities for pupils to take part in events with other Catholic and non-catholic organisations. The whole drive of the school's current practice is to invite the community, especially parents, into the school, as well as reaching out to others through regular charity activities. International themes and events permeate the school year and all classes have a welcome board to celebrate the traditions and cultures of those joining the school.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils achieve well in Religious Education. They generally make steady progress, similar to that of English, to reach standards that are average by the end of Year 6. The current Year 6, however, has made faster progress than previous cohorts, reflecting the accelerating rate of progress now evident throughout the school. Those with specific barriers to learning also make similarly sound progress. In discussion, pupils have not only a thorough knowledge of Catholic faith but also some of the traditions of other major religions such as Judaism, Islam and

Hinduism. Pupils' work is well presented and pupils of all age groups and abilities engage well in learning. Their awareness of traditional Catholic prayers is good because of the carefully constructed curriculum. Pupils, at their own levels, know the pattern of the liturgical year, are familiar with the scriptures, and are clear as to what is expected of a Catholic community

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. Pupils enjoy lessons because of the many and varied activities they experience. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and contribute greatly to pupils' cooperation in learning. The use of new technologies and a range of other resources were real strengths of lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith, including those who are not Catholics, because of the carefully planned scheme of work and the regular staff training. Well-targeted questioning, together with a classroom ethos that encourages queries and explanations, also supports pupils' language and communication skills. In a Year 6 class on the theme of 'treasures', pupils were very reflective, following the scripture readings from Genesis and Revelation, well supported by a helpful power-point presentation. Marking is generally helpful and regular and pupils are ready to respond to teachers' advice. Although teachers do plan differentiated work for their classes, this is not always translated into practice that ensures pupils of all abilities fully understand concepts and ideas.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is excellent. The Religious Education department, with its current schemes of work, provides a broad curriculum which fully meets the Diocesan requirements with regard to curriculum time. It is well supplemented by daily prayer and worship. Schemes of work, based on the scheme 'Here I am', are carefully constructed to ensure progression through year groups. Because work is well matched to pupils' earlier learning, it contributes effectively to promoting not only their Catholic faith but also to their basic and personal skills. All pupils are taught to respect other faiths and cultures. The school's mission statement is embodied within schemes of work so that the school's emphasis on dignity and respect is highlighted. Besides the statutory requirements for the Religious Education programme, the school offers a very wide range of opportunities to enrich the whole community as well as the pupils' experience of Catholic traditions.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

There is excellent leadership and management of Religious Education. The deputy headteacher, together with the headteacher, ensure that its development is given high priority. Staff care deeply about their pupils' spiritual development and are very supportive of the school's vision for the curriculum. Self-critical but creative monitoring and evaluation of the subject area is at the heart of the school's strong progress since the last inspection. The many non-catholic as well as Catholic staff are well guided in their expectations of what the pupils can achieve with a portfolio of samples of assessed work for each year group to guide them. The subject leader has a strong sense of the Church's educational mission and shares this with all staff who display a genuine sense of spiritual purpose in their day-to-day work. In the very well kept learning

environment, the subject leader ensures that resources and staff are deployed very effectively so that all pupils, including those of other faiths, are included fully in the religious life of the school.

Grade 1