

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

Sion-Manning Roman Catholic Girls' School

75 St Charles Square, London W10 6EL

Date of inspection: 18 – 19 November 2015



A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade 2

The content of the classroom religious education is good. The department meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The schemes of work are thoroughly mapped to the Curriculum Directory at all key stages. Teaching is consistently good over time with some examples of outstanding lessons. Religious education lessons are generally very well planned with clear learning objectives. Teachers create a positive climate for learning with resource-rich lessons that engage the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. Where teaching was less effective, the pace of learning slows and the level of challenge is not as great as it might be because there are missed opportunities for pupils to make rapid progress. Staff have developed good working relationship with pupils based on high expectations of behaviour. Pupil achievement is good. The attainment at Key Stage 4 compares favourably with other subjects in the school, with a good number of pupils gaining A*/A grades. There is however scope for further improvement both in regard to the overall achievement of pupils as well as the proportion who achieve at the higher levels. The newly appointed head of department has a rigorous approach to developing systems for success. There is strong evidence that the department is on track to deliver improved outcomes for pupils.

B. The Catholic life of the school

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 2

The school meets the requirements for pupils to receive the weekly entitlement of 10% curriculum time as directed by the Bishops of England and Wales. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for the Catholic life of the school has ensured that, despite the lack of a chaplain, the worship experience for pupils is still good. Much has been done to improve the consistency of morning prayer; it is now a daily occurrence. The school has a strong commitment to the Common Good as evidenced through its extensive programme of good works. There is a tangible sense of respect between pupils, including those of different faiths. The school's key relationships with parents, parishes, other Catholic schools and the Diocese require improvements. The interim headteacher has made rapid progress in laying the foundations for effective partnerships. However, more time is needed to develop these into authentic partnerships. The local parish priest is very supportive of the school and is confident of school's potential. The newly appointed interim headteacher has within the last nine months made significant progress in addressing some of the difficulties the school has recently faced. The newly appointed governors have made rapid progress in acquiring an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have put in place efficient plans to support the leadership of the school to drive improvement.

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 inspectors spent two days in school, visited seven lessons and two assemblies, and carried out 10 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 Sion-Manning, Ladbroke Grove was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework 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.

Inspection Team

Mr Matthew Dell	Lead Inspector
Mrs Janice McGurrell	Associate Inspector
Mrs Katie Marson	Associate Inspector

Description of School

This voluntary aided girl's school is an 11-16 four form entry in the LA of Kensington and Chelsea and the locality of Ladbroke Grove. The school serves the parishes of St Pius X, St Charles Square, as well as many others across West London. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 32%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 23%, from other faiths 37% and of no declared faith 8%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 62%.

There are 424 pupils on roll, with nine pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is above average. There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals. 225 pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	207/4801
URN Number:	100503

Interim Headteacher:	Mr Paul Kehoe
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Amanda Sayers

Date of previous inspection:	24 th June 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	1

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

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 has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the religious education department was challenged to maintain the drive to improve attainment at Key Stages 3 and 4. There is evidence that this has been a focus and it has been partially achieved. Also at the last inspection, the religious education department was given the target to continue to develop teaching and learning by sharing good practice and continuing to work collaboratively. There is strong evidence that this target has been met. The newly appointed head of department has established an affirmative department work ethic that is based around sharing resources and an openness to learning from each other.

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

Grade 2

The content of the classroom religious education is good. The department meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The schemes of work are thoroughly mapped to the Curriculum Directory at all key stages. Within the schemes of work there is sufficient detail to enable effective lesson planning as the learning outcomes for pupils are clearly identified. There is a clear commitment to ensuring pupils experience a systematic programme of study organised around the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the Church, its beliefs, celebrations and way of life of Catholics who follow that teaching. The teaching of other faiths is planned for effectively. At Key Stage 4 pupils follow the Edexcel GCSE, studying two units: Religion and Life based on a study of Roman Catholic Christianity and Religion and Society which is studied in reference to both the ethical teaching of Christianity and Islam. The school has a tradition of compressing Key Stage 3 into just two years, with Year 9 pupils starting the GCSE course a year early. The quality of classroom display is very good which ensure an attractive and conducive learning environment. There is a good programme of enrichment, such as visits to places of worship, the range of which could be extended further. This is currently under review and with the new GCSE specifications for first teaching in September 2016 the department is well placed to manage the changes needed to the curriculum.

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

Grade 2

Pupil achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels which are broadly average. The department uses the Diocesan baseline criteria as a starting point in Year 7 to measure pupil progress. Regular in-house assessments provide an excellent structure for pupils to achieve. Moderation within the department, as well opportunities with other local Catholic schools, ensures that progress by pupils is accurately judged. In Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress. The department has excellent tracking systems for all year groups and classes. There is good evidence of intervention strategies that teachers use to tackle under performance. There has been a tradition of not entering a significant number of pupils for the Religious Studies GCSE and instead entering them for the Entry Level course. The new head of department has made a commitment to break this tradition and enter all students for the GCSE. Given the ability profile of the pupils, this is now in line with practice of other Catholic school in the diocese. The attainment at Key Stage 4 compares favourably with other subjects in the school, with a good number of pupils gaining A*/A grades. There is however scope for further improvement both in regard to the overall achievement of pupils as well as the proportion who achieve at the higher levels. Current performance of Year 11 in end

of unit assessments indicates students are making good progress and are on track to deliver an improved set of results. Pupils at Key Stage 4 appreciate the new assessment system and feel that these support their progress. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and as such make a good impact on their progress.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching is good. Teaching is consistently good over time with some examples of outstanding lessons. Religious education lessons are generally very well planned with clear learning objectives. In a number of lessons pupils were instructed to copy out all the learning objectives, sometimes this task needlessly slowed the pace of the lesson. Teachers carefully differentiate their lessons to enable all pupils to achieve. In a lesson on the benefits and problems of living in a multi-faith society, the lesson was structured effectively to support all students in developing their reasoning. Teachers create a positive climate for learning with resource-rich lessons that engage the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. In a lesson on capital punishment, creative resources resulted in high levels of engagement and misconceptions were clarified astutely so that progress was very good. Where teaching was less effective, the pace of learning slows and the level of challenge is not as great as it might be as there are missed opportunities for pupils to make rapid progress. Sometimes the starter activity became the main task of the lesson. Homework tasks are prepared well to enable pupils to write at length and pupils' work is marked to a high standard. There is strong evidence of a culture of dialogue marking which results in pupils making good progress, as they are active participants in identifying the next steps in their learning. Staff have developed good working relationships with pupils based on high expectations of behaviour. Pupils feel confident that they will be listened to and that their questions will be valued. In line with the school's policies on developing literacy across the curriculum, staff have lots of strategies for improving pupils' understanding and use of key religious terms.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership and management of the religious education department are good. The newly appointed head of department has a strong vision for religious education and a rigorous approach to developing systems for success. The head of department has an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the department and has clearly worked hard to prepare for the inspection. The department regularly checks the experience pupils have in religious education. For example, following enrichment visits to places of worship pupils evaluate their learning. In a short space of time the head of department has successfully introduced a number of new initiatives that have enhanced the assessment procedures to support pupil progress. There are very good resources that enable pupils to understand their grades and improve learning. Staff share their teaching resources with each other and work collaboratively. The head of department is very well supported by the assistant headteacher who is the line manager. The school has a good culture of monitoring and as a result the leadership team is confident that the head of department can secure further improvements needed to make the department outstanding. There is strong evidence that the department is on track to deliver improved outcomes for pupils.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Further improve the overall achievement of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4, in particular to increase the number of pupils that achieve A*-A.
- To further develop the consistency across the department so that pupils enjoy parity of experience.
- Continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning by improving the pace of lessons so that pupils move more quickly onto tasks that challenge and stretch them.

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 has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection identified the issues to embed a wider variety of prayer experiences for pupils, and to use the enthusiasm of the new lay chaplain to encourage further pupil participation in liturgy and student leadership in chaplaincy. With regard to the prayer experience this target has been met. There is however a significant issue as the school is currently without a chaplain. The appointment of a chaplain would enable the school to further develop the Catholic life of the school. This deficiency has been recognised by the newly appointed governing body and interim headteacher who plan to recruit a new chaplain.

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

Grade 2

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is good. The school meets the requirements for pupils to receive the weekly entitlement of 10% curriculum time as directed by the Bishops of England and Wales. The budget for the department is comparable to other core departments. The accommodation of the department is good although they are not centrally located. The chapel is a good resource that is under used by the school. The governors are committed to the development of excellent religious education. The leadership team provides excellent support and guidance to the department and ensure that religious education has a good status in the school.

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

Grade 2

The experience of Catholic worship is good. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for the Catholic life of the school has ensured that despite the lack of a chaplain, the worship experience for pupils is still good. The prayer life is a central feature of the school. Staff regularly pray together at the start of their meetings. Much has been done to improve the consistency of morning prayer; it is now a daily occurrence. The prayer resources are a helpful support to staff and pupils. The celebration of the Eucharist is a positive regular experience for pupils, however there is scope for a more class Masses. The school is supported by a number of clergy in the area so that pupils have regular opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Pupils from other faith traditions experience understanding and respect for their religious tradition. Pupils are given many opportunities to assist with liturgy through being liturgy representatives. Assemblies are well planned and resourced. Pupils are supported in preparing and leading assemblies. An assembly on ways of standing up to bullies was led by pupils. It was a good experience for pupils as there was good use of scripture to develop a theological rationale for challenging bullying. The atmosphere for prayer and silent reflection was excellent and, as a result, pupil behaviour was outstanding. The school's chapel is under used at present.

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

Grade2

The school has a strong commitment to the Common Good as evidenced through its extensive programme of good works, including volunteering at the local soup kitchen, fund-raising for national charities such as Children in Need and organising a Christmas dinner for the elderly. In the past, the Citizens UK initiative was popular amongst pupils, but changes in staffing mean that this has been discontinued, and campaigning for social justice is an area where there is scope for further development. Fair trade fortnight supports pupils in understanding global ethical issues and this is underpinned by cross-curricular work in geography and religious education. The school's work in this area has been recognised with a national award, the Fairtrade mark. The CAFOD tuck-shop is led by SEN pupils; their contribution is clearly valued and they play a valuable part in the charitable life of the school. Some pupils can articulate the theological rationale behind their call to serve, but others struggle to do so and it would be beneficial to further emphasize the links between the Church's teaching and the good works performed by so many. Pupils' achievements and talents are celebrated regularly and through different forums. Student leadership is demonstrated through pupils assuming a variety of roles, including acting as liturgy and charity representatives. There is a tangible sense of respect between pupils, including those of different faiths, and a tolerance of other beliefs.

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 3

The school's key relationships with parents, parishes, other Catholic schools and the Diocese require improvements. The interim headteacher has made rapid progress in laying the foundations for effective partnerships. More time is needed to develop these into authentic partnerships. Partnership with parents is an area for development. There have been recent improvements such as the investment into new systems to communicate with parents and the interim headteacher has an open door policy for parents. The diocesan parents' questionnaire demonstrates that the school has the general support of parents. Relationships with the immediate parish have recently improved and again there are more ways in which the school can develop the partnership. The local parish priest is very supportive of the school and is confident of school's potential. Pupils have Mass in the church and pupils visit the church as part of the religious education curriculum. The interim headteacher has made good progress by re-establishing links with the neighbouring Catholic primary school and Catholic sixth form college. There is work to be done in developing partnerships so that pupils in all institutions can directly benefit from collaboration. There are good links with the diocese and staff engage with the support offered by the Diocesan education service. The head of religious education and the assistant headteacher for the Catholic life of the school have both contributed to the development of Diocesan resources for the Year of Mercy.

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

Grade 2

The school has had a recent change of headteacher with the previous long standing headteacher retiring through ill health. The newly appointed interim headteacher has within the last nine months made significant progress in addressing some of the difficulties the school has recently faced. In a short space of time there has been a palpable change within the school and there is evidence that standards have started to improve. The interim headteacher is a visible presence in the school which pupils particularly appreciate. One pupil described the recent changes, "in assembly our

headteacher inspires us to be better.” The mission statement has been recently revised and shared with staff. This now expresses more effectively the school’s understanding of itself as a Catholic school. This now needs to be embedded across the school by engaging pupils and parents in understanding the vision and values of the school. The school’s self-evaluation is strong and as a result plans to improve the school are also good. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for the Catholic life of the school makes a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school, ensuring that new staff are inducted and that all staff regularly reflect on the nature of the school as a Catholic community. There is a clear pathway for making the improvements needed to develop the Catholic life of the school to the next level. There have been recent significant changes of personnel, resulting in an almost completely new governing body. The newly appointed governors have made rapid progress in acquiring an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have put in place efficient plans to support the leadership of the school to drive improvement. There is a new structure for committees and a very thorough work schedule that will enable the school’s performance to be held to account much more effectively. The chair of governors and the team of highly skilled governors have an excellent vision and ambition for the school to be an outstanding Catholic school. The link governor for the Catholic life of the school and religious education has made significant progress in safeguarding and promoting the Catholic life of the school.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Continue to celebrate the success of the school in the local Catholic community and improve the level of recruitment of pupils to the school.
- Seek to appoint a substantive chaplain so that the Catholic life of the school can be further driven forward.
- Explore the potential for collaboration with the immediate local Catholic primary school and college so that pupils benefit.
- Further develop strategies that foster a strong partnership between school and home.
- Embed the new mission statement in the life of the school by sharing it with pupils and parents.