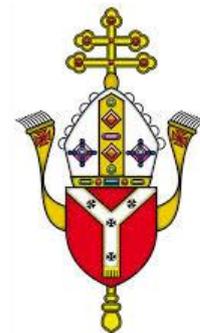


# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report



## St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Underwood Road, London E1 5AW

Date of inspection: 03 July 2015

### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

The well-thought-out curriculum offers the pupils and staff excellent opportunities to ensure that progress in religious education is excellent. A wide range of creative resources is used very well to bring to life the content of the Curriculum Directory. As pupils and governors noted, it is not only in religious education but also across other subjects that religious education is promoted. Children were enthused by the work they had done in art and Spanish, for example. Although attainment is average, from their starting points, pupils make excellent progress to achieve outstandingly well in religious education. They are enthusiastic learners because of inspiring and engaging teaching. The subject leader has a deep understanding of the centrality of religious education in St Anne's. He is supported very well by excellent senior leadership. There is excellent participation in moderation and training events within the diocese. The subject leader also makes a very good contribution to the moderation of pupils' work across a cluster of schools. Religious education at St Anne's makes an outstanding contribution to its Catholic life. Governors have a very clear grasp of the importance of classroom religious education and an excellent understanding of how well children are doing. They were also instrumental in ensuring that the subject leader is a member of the senior team.

### 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 I**

The headteacher and her team of staff have created an oasis for our Catholic families where children flourish away from the external, busy, urban area. The provision is outstanding. Pupils and staff at St Anne's experience a vibrant Catholic life. They have a wide range of experiences and a rich sacramental life despite the difficulties in finding a permanent school chaplain. The school has been especially creative in encouraging clergy from outside of the parish to support the leadership's efforts to promote the faith of its pupils as well as many Catholic traditions. Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school. Pupils and staff, at their own levels, understand what it means to promote the Common Good. Pupils are articulate in explaining the theological underpinning of their charitable work. Partnership with all of the school's stakeholders is very strong and the school would welcome much more involvement with the local parish. It does its best to form links with adjacent parishes and has accomplished much in involving other clergy in the school's Eucharistic celebrations and sacramental life. Staff training in all phases is excellent and all staff of whatever faith support the Church's mission within the school. School leaders and governors have succeeded exceptionally well in their work in this Diocesan Catholic school.

## 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 one day in school, visited 11 lessons, two assemblies, and undertook a learning walk jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors carried out several formal and informal interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, a scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents. No local clergy were available on the day.

The Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Whitechapel 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

Mrs Sheila Nolan	Lead Inspector
Mrs Elisabeth Nye	Associate Inspector

### Description of School

This larger than average one- and a half-form entry primary school in the local authority of Tower hamlets and the locality of Whitechapel serves families from the parish of St Anne's and a number of adjacent parishes. The school, founded in 1973, originally by religious from the Marist congregation, now belongs to the Westminster diocesan family of schools. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 57%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 17% and from other Faiths 12%. Fourteen per cent of the pupils have no faith backgrounds. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 52%. Eight staff hold a Catholic qualification.

There are 334 pupils on roll, with 8 pupils with statements of special educational need and disabilities/ Education Health & Care Plans. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional Language is well above average. There is a well above average proportion of families claiming free school meals. Around 60%, 192 pupils, are eligible for the Pupil Premium. This is very high. The mobility of the pupils attending the school is also very high.

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DFE Number:	2413411
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Headteacher:	Mrs S Mouna
Chair of Governors:	Mrs V Spencer

Date of previous inspection:	02 April 2009
Previous Inspection grades:	Outstanding

<b>Key for inspection grades:</b>	<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?**

There have been significant changes in St Anne's since the last inspection. New members of staff have joined at every level of leadership, including the head teacher and the coordinator of religious education, who is also a senior member of staff. The rate of positive change in religious education has accelerated notably over the last year. The re-structured governing body has a better understanding than previously of the religious education curriculum. Able pupils are now challenged to achieve at a level similar to or exceeding their outcomes in the other core subjects. Assessment has improved and is used much more effectively than previously as a tool to aid planning as well as informing checks on progress. On-going professional development is helping to support teachers' knowledge in religious education.

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

#### **Grade I**

The Curriculum Directory is incorporated thoroughly into the scheme of work for religious education at St Anne's. Links to the diocesan attainment targets are developing well. The four areas of social justice, celebration, the Church and revelation are highlighted on the school's website. Staff training ensures that both Catholic and non-Catholic staff know and understand these four areas of the Curriculum Directory. The religious education department is very well resourced. It adopts truly creative ways in which to engage the pupils who often start school with very limited knowledge of the Church and its traditions. Progression is built well into the scheme of work with themes and topics being revisited regularly to support pupils in deepening their knowledge. Although the school uses a published scheme, it supplements the materials well with additional resources, many gleaned from the regular participation in diocesan training. The subject leader is working further to map the content of the published scheme so that it fits securely within the diocesan attainment targets. There is good attention to other major faiths, utilising to great effect, the experiences of pupils with other than Catholic faith backgrounds.

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

#### **Grade I**

Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are often significantly below what is expected for the age group. The school builds increasingly very well on these starting points so that by the end of Year 6, attainment in religious education is at least average and progress is outstanding in developing the religious literacy of the pupils. This means that the achievement of the pupils at St Anne's is excellent overall. The limited use of English for many pupils, on starting school, explains why pupils' rates of progress accelerate the longer they remain in the school. Additionally, the drive for excellence in teaching and the enhancement of staff knowledge through training means that teachers now have the tools through which to support and deepen the pupils' religious literacy.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners, participating exceptionally well in classroom learning. They are confident users of religious vocabulary, and use their growing English writing skills to very good

effect in their work in religious education. Disadvantaged pupils make up more than half of the school population. They have caught up with their peers faster in religious education than in other core subjects. Internal tracking data indicates that in religious education, pupils are far exceeding their rates of progress in writing and reading. These rates of progress were borne out in the pupils' written work, in their 'blogs', and in conversation and in lessons. The 'why of things' is used very well to deepen children's understanding and to develop their religious literacy, particularly through the 'big questions' of the day.

## **The quality of teaching**

**Grade I**

Teaching is typically at least good and often outstanding. Over time, the on-going development of teaching so that it is never less than good, means that pupils at St Anne's experience excellent classroom practice. Teachers plan very well for creative and engaging resources through which to help the pupils learn and deepen their understanding. Planning is closely linked to teachers' understanding of the topic through the learning intentions against which most staff are now adept at checking learning. As a result, there are excellent examples of marked work that carefully guides pupils to improve. More and more pupils are learning to respond well to this written guidance. The impact of the efforts to improve religious literacy in the school are seen clearly in some of the extended writing in Year 6, through for example, the work on the 'Stations of the Cross' and on Judaism. As a result of the work to challenge pupils' depth of understanding through excellent materials and questioning, children are now able to reach the highest levels available in religious education. Other marked strengths in the teaching of religious education include the outstanding working relationships and the excellent attitudes to learning of the pupils. The latter are clearly demonstrated in the careful presentation of work in the children's books. Support staff are deployed very successfully to help pupils, many of whom have quite significant needs. Although all staff teaching religious education buy into the school's mission, the co-ordinator rightly intends to develop teaching even further through enhancing staff knowledge and ensuring that the best marking and assessment practice is fully embedded in the every classroom.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

**Grade I**

The quality of leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. In a short space of time, the subject leader has driven forward the central role of religious education as the core of the curriculum. Religious education is now a priority in the governors' development plan. His work to improve teaching, and in particular teachers' subject knowledge, has very effectively engaged staff and pupils in active engagement in learning. He is reflectively pioneering non-standard ways in which to capture the development of pupils' religious literacy, particularly for those many for whom English is an additional language. The assessment and tracking of the pupils' learning and progress is robust and in line with that of other core subjects. The co-ordinator not only participates in regular moderation meetings but also organises cluster moderation of the pupils' work. He is generous with his time and ready to support staff, both from the school and from other schools, particularly in assessing against the attainment targets. The subject leader has an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the department. Self-assessment is broadly accurate, if somewhat modest. The subject leader knows the department well and is committed to fulfilling the Church's global mission through the development of religious education in St Anne's.

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

- Ensure that the very best assessment practice is embedded in the work of all staff, particularly through further enhancement of teachers' subject knowledge.
- Take forward plans to identify innovative ways in which to capture the attainment and progress of pupils, particularly those at the early stages of learning English.

## **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 introduction of the Wednesday Word has improved communications between home and school as has the religious education newsletter and the carefully managed classroom blogs. Parents are invited to all liturgical celebrations and to traditional Catholic practice occasions such as ‘praying the rosary’. Class prayer books have been introduced, going with the pupils throughout the school. Separate phase 1 and 2 liturgies have enabled the school to match the worship to the needs of the pupils more fully. Parents of children in the early years are encouraged to pray with the group at the end of a unit of work. There are many more opportunities for children to contribute to the Common Good through volunteering. Collaboration with other Catholic schools has strengthened greatly. Training for staff is firmly based on the needs of both the individual and the whole school as well as on diocesan priorities. The school is doing its utmost to encourage local clergy to become involved in the governance of the school but is hampered by the temporary nature of some placements in the local parish as well as by the limitations of English in a mainly Portuguese-speaking parish.

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

#### **Grade I**

Religious Education at St Anne’s is very well provided for in terms of its place in the curriculum. At least 10% of timetabled time is allocated to religious education. The head teacher with her senior staff, among whom is the religious education coordinator, ensures that a Catholic ethos is at the heart of how the school operates. This is very clearly seen on the school website which gives priority to the school’s Catholic life. The many non-Catholic families using the services of the school are expected to participate fully in lessons and worship. Resources and accommodation are generous and the governors and the head teacher offer excellent support for the Catholic life of the school and for curriculum religious education. The school’s mission statement of ‘Excellence together with God as our guide’, sums up the school’s driving ambition and the commitment to Gospel values.

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

#### **Grade I**

The celebration of the key events of the liturgical year through the Eucharistic liturgy and the sacrament of reconciliation is at the heart of the school’s worship. Pupils are actively involved in the preparation of, and in leading, worship that is linked closely to the Wednesday Word and the Church’s year. Prayer is woven into all aspects of school life and a recent innovation in the form of a class prayer book that continues with pupils throughout the school shows very active participation by individuals as well as classes. Pupils learn traditional prayers as well as confidently praying spontaneously or reflecting on a theme. Assemblies, phase liturgies, hymn practise, a daily decade of the rosary in May and October, as well as staff and governors’ prayer all flourish alongside the

celebration of class and school Masses. Pupils also benefit greatly from an annual retreat day, well matched to their needs. The time for quiet reflection is encouraged through the beautiful prayer garden where they can find a space and time to reflect in their busy lives. Year saints support the children well in mirroring what it means to be a Catholic. Although the school expects all pupils to take part in Catholic prayer and worship, it is sensitive to the needs of staff of other faiths and provides a quiet prayer space for them. The opportunities offered to the pupils and their families are well evaluated and developed accordingly.

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

### **Grade I**

Pupils flourish at St Anne's because there are excellent levels of respect for the range of cultural, social and religious background of the members of the school community. Staff provide excellent role models for the pupils in this respect. Cross-curricular themes, often linked to CAFOD, Fairtrade and other similar organisations, encourage children to think ethically and to grow in understanding of the Church's mission for justice and peace. Pupils have first-hand experiences and accounts of local, national and international contexts. The school uses these exceptionally well to support the pupils' involvement with the Church's global mission. Catholic social teaching is the focus of the head teacher's weekly assembly. Children respond very well and practically. On one occasion, for example, they followed up an assembly by identifying a local homeless shelter and started a food bank. On another, they wrote to the Prime Minister to ask if they could send aid to Syria. Other charities supported by the school include the Catholic Children's Society, Providence Row, Bernardos and Macmillan Cancer care. In their current work on special places, pupils were at ease in linking the canticle of St Francis with the Pope Francis' recent encyclical. Children are encouraged to share their talents in the service of others and are very pleased to recognise the gifts of others.

## **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**

Thirty-four responses to the school's questionnaire were strongly positive about the provision at St Anne's. Any issues in religious education raised by parents are addressed rapidly. Parental links are excellent overall. Parents are invited to formal and informal school events, have daily opportunities to meet staff and are encouraged to join whole-school celebrations both in the school and in the local Church building. Governors run a surgery for parents during school events to support their efforts to form strong links with families.

The school has worked very hard to try to establish a close relationship with the local parish. A revolving door of clergy and limited English in what is a mainly Portuguese speaking community have defeated many of the efforts. Excellent working relationships are now in place with St Patrick's parish in Wapping and also with the Jesuits there. The school is actively seeking a member of the clergy to be part of the governing body. Diocesan links are excellent, the school participates regularly in training, in moderation activities and in any liturgical events. The Bishop is a welcome visitor to the school and has recently blessed the new school library. The school works particularly well with their assigned diocesan advisor and the impact of some of this work was clear in the quality of the self-evaluation document provided. St Anne's clearly sees itself as a member of the diocesan family of schools

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

### **Grade I**

The school has a deep understanding of itself as a Catholic school and as a member of the diocesan family of schools. Leaders and managers are fully committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrate this in practice through the improvements in all aspects of school life. Self-evaluation is generally accurate if at times a little harsh. The school body regularly reflects on its Catholic practice and on the provision of a Catholic way of life for its pupils. St Anne's has much good practice in inducting staff new to the school and its Catholic Christian tradition. Those from other faiths are valued within the team and actively participate in developing the school's Catholic identity. Governors share in the strategic leadership of the school, offering excellent support and challenge. Recent surveys of parents show that they have clear systems for gauging the views of families. Regular visits allow them to see for themselves how pupils and staff fare in the thriving Catholic community of St Anne's.

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

- Make further representation to the diocese to support the search for a local member of the clergy to participate in the governance of the school as well as supporting the liturgical and sacramental life of the staff and pupils.