

# Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School

19 Cirencester St, London W2 5SR

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 9 May 2019



## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is good

- The school provides a broad curriculum in religious education and it is carefully linked to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Pupil achievement is good, Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and the content has been successfully adapted to their level and approach.
- The quality of teaching is always good and at times is outstanding. There is very good behaviour in all classes seen. Religious education homework tasks are given to the pupils to consolidate and broaden their learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. There is clear planning to meet the differentiated needs of pupils. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils to progress and deepen their knowledge of Catholic teaching.
- The leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. There is a clear vision in place regarding the importance and development of religious education as being at the core of the curriculum, shared by the headteacher, religious education coordinator and governors. The religious education link governor has given staff inset on the theological foundations of religious education.

### Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Challenging questioning is not yet in place in all classes.
- The skills related to the 'HOT' project (Higher Order Thinking) are not yet fully developed.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Religious education is clearly the beating heart of the school. Pupils are effectively encouraged to be involved and interested and through the interviews with parents and pupils the evidence was given that this has succeeded.
- Religious education is given at least 10% of curriculum time, as required by the expectation of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- The provision for prayer and liturgy is outstanding. The liturgical calendar is threaded through the life of the school.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and works closely with it in every way, including explaining Church teaching to the pupils.
- The school has a creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing'. It provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents as individuals and as a community.
- Parents recounted the many ways this school goes the extra mile with them Partnership is central to the school's way of thinking.
- Leadership and management are outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The school in true partnership is developing a new mission statement, and it clearly indicates how well the leaders and management of the school are promoting its Catholic ethos.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspection highlighted three issues for improvement, the monitoring of religious education (RE), the effectiveness of working walls enabling pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work, and the use of ICT tablets. All these issues have been fully addressed and improvements are in place. Further the school has introduced throughout the RE lessons the emphasis on 'HOT' – Higher Order Thinking. This initiative is closely linked to the working walls where classes display their learning journey on each topic, following the steps of 'Explore, Reveal and Respond'. The RE link governor has given staff inset on the theological foundations of RE and the links to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). Further inset has been given through the ongoing YOUCAT course.

### The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

Pupils enjoy RE lessons and the content of classroom religious education has been successfully adapted to their level and approach. The school provides a broad curriculum in RE and it is carefully linked to the RECD. The efforts of the head and the RE curriculum coordinator to analyse closely the needs of the pupils and adapt accordingly are outstanding. Staff follow a commercial RE programme with both consistency and breadth. It is used creatively and it supplements and enhances the four key areas of the RECD: the study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus, the central beliefs of the Church and the relationship between life and faith. There is good linking to Scripture whenever relevant; this is further enhanced by reference to the 'Wednesday Word' and the reflection on Thursday mornings in the church next door, prepared by the pupils themselves. There is clear planning to meet the differentiated needs of pupils. The school improvement plan has focused on improving reading and writing, which has led to very good improvement in RE. Other faiths teaching is well planned – the faiths taught in the three weeks each year devoted to them include Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. The variety and abundance of cross curricular links are a feature of RE in the school, evidenced by displays and artefacts on show. Different and varied teaching styles match the content of RE to the needs of the different groups of pupils in each class.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is good, evidenced by school data, deanery and diocesan moderation and progress seen in pupil books. Attainment is generally at least as good as other core subjects. Pupils know and understand what they have to do to improve their work. This is an area that the school has worked on since the last diocesan inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. The pupils were enthused and engaged which impacts positively on the progress they make. Good progress is being made by most pupils. The school's current focus is on greater challenge for pupils, supported by the work on 'HOT' questioning skills. The school is focusing on 'HOT' questioning in Maths and RE currently, employing the services of an outside consultant to lead the staff development in these areas. Pupils' religious literacy is good and they are confident in their use of religious language. The school is adopting greater use of driver words to assist pupils in understanding their knowledge and progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching is always good and at times is outstanding. There is very good discipline and behaviour in all classes seen. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils to progress and deepen their knowledge of Catholic teaching. The use of Scripture is fully integrated in all the teaching. Pupils enjoy exploring Scripture and are able to link passages to their daily experience. Teaching is often creative, evident in most but not all classes. 'HOT' is achieved through challenging questions,

and the pupils enjoy them. Pupils are involved in their own learning progress and were able to describe what they had learned and found interesting. There is effective monitoring of teaching by the head and deputy, and it is carried out in such a way that it gives confidence to the teachers to experiment. Pupils are encouraged to be articulate. Pupils' RE work books indicate all teaching is followed up with notes and summaries, and the pupils are proud of the quality of their work in them. Pupils are aware of the level at which they are working and how to make progress. RE homework tasks are given to the pupils to consolidate and broaden their learning. There is a common tradition of making artefacts, for example items to illustrate Adoremus, the National Congress on the Eucharist. Other artefacts were legacies from the Year of Faith and the Year of Mercy, which the school actively promoted.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education**

**is outstanding**

The close teamwork of the head and deputy, along with the confident team spirit of the whole teaching staff, means that the leadership and management of RE is outstanding. There is a clear vision in place regarding the importance and development of RE as being at the core of the curriculum. The deputy is a confident and gifted RE coordinator, ensuring there is a mutually supportive approach. Staff planning and professional development are well supported. Newly appointed staff are well inducted into the RE programme and its primacy of place in the life of the school. The characteristic that was well noted was the display of transparency and candour, indicating that staff were comfortable to be involved in self review and improvement. Staff were happy to seek help. Excellent initiatives to deepen the knowledge and skills of the staff in respect of Catholic practice and teaching have been put in place. Governors are closely involved with RE. The new RE link governor has been through diocesan training and takes an active interest. He has been instrumental in improving the inset available in RE to the staff.

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

- Improve challenging questioning, and develop 'HOT' skills in all classes.
- Continue to work on assessment, with particular regard to developments in diocesan recommendations.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous report made recommendations regarding the development of prayer corners and displays, the need to review the timetable and to develop sustainable overseas charity links. All three recommendations have been successfully addressed. Prayer corners and displays very effectively portray the liturgical season and the progress of the pupils. The timetabling of RE is appropriate in the light of the outstanding place of RE at the core of the curriculum. The connections with overseas charities are developed with a further link in prospect.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

**is outstanding**

RE is clearly the beating heart of the school. Pupils are effectively encouraged to be involved and interested and through the interviews with parents and pupils the evidence was given that this has succeeded. Displays provided an excellent message. At least 10% of classroom curriculum is being delivered as required by the expectation of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The creative curriculum approach adopted by the school means that the links to RE in art, drama and music as well as in other subjects are all in place. The religious ethos of the school shines through, especially in the school's hospitality, considerate behaviour, approachable staff and positive learning environment. The school's website is itself an articulate presentation of the Christian values that the school lives by and which it is expecting the individual pupils to grow into. The varied displays and artefacts liberally posted around the school proclaim the gospel message.

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

**is outstanding**

The experience of Catholic worship and prayer is built into the very core of the school. The provision for prayer and liturgy is outstanding. The liturgical calendar is threaded through the life of the school. The various feast days and special celebrations in the Church's year are observed and celebrated. There are four moments of prayer each day and the pupils are involved in writing prayers, both in class and in the books that go home and back. Pupils receive the 'Wednesday Word' and there is a voluntary reflection in the church next door presented by the 'Mini-Vinnies' on next Sunday's gospel, attended by both pupils and parents. Liturgy is well supported. There are regular class Masses. In the classes, pupils prepare a prayer and reflection session at the end of each topic, bringing out the connection and relevance to the life of faith. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and works closely with it in every way, explaining Church teaching to the pupils and running sessions for the whole staff on the Catechism and Catholic theology. The school assembly on the rosary seen during the course of the inspection was an excellent contribution to the teaching of Catholic practice.

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

**is outstanding**

The school has a creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing' and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents as individuals and as a community. Within the school, outstanding systems are well established that illustrate that respect for and value of each individual are central to its way of being. All gifts are recognised. The Church's call to action for justice and peace is fully appreciated and understood as is appropriate for the pupils concerned. As a Year 5 child commented 'What we do for others, we do for Christ.' Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need, over time and in depth and are proactive in creative

ways of responding locally, nationally and globally. This is clearly evidenced in the charities the school supports annually and over time. As one child stated 'we are servants for the Common Good.' Not only do pupils actively engage in acts of service but they have an excellent understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. The school's 'Mini-Vinnies' were particularly vocal on this. Pupils visit the care home next door to sing for the residents. Community cohesion is supported and celebrated within the school, reinforcing the inclusive catholicity of the Church. As a 'Rights Respecting School', pupils know the importance of such respect when linked to the housing and benefits challenges that some families face.

**The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**

**is outstanding**

The parents and school enjoy an excellent relationship. Parents told us of the many ways this school goes the extra mile with them, for instance, letters to do with housing; help with pupils with special needs. Partnership is central to the school's way of thinking. The school's website is particularly family friendly, with the documents included being available in over a hundred languages. Parents are welcome at various school liturgies, including the gospel reflections given by the pupils in the church next door on Thursday mornings. The parish priest is a good presence in the school and the pupils gain personal and spiritual insight into their faith through him. The school works alongside parish representatives when planning joint ventures. The school participates in local, deanery and diocesan partnerships, attending all moderation meetings and sharing in curriculum RE development. The 'Mini-Vinnies' act as ambassadors of the school at visits to events at Westminster Cathedral. The school clearly demonstrates the home/school/parish partnership that is a characteristic of an excellent Catholic school.

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

**is outstanding**

Leadership and management is outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The school in true partnership is developing a new mission statement, and it clearly indicates how well the leaders and management of the school are promoting its Catholic ethos. The school's self-evaluation is characterised with attention to detail, accuracy of judgements, and recognition both of what is going well and what is still work in progress. The governors, headteacher, together with the deputy, are outstanding leaders in this Catholic school. The governors exercise very well their oversight, offering both challenge and support. They are strategic in their planning and work closely with the headteacher and deputy. The link RE governor, who is also the parish priest, is effective in the support he offers at all levels, including the induction in RE of new teachers.

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

- Encourage further development of global linking, for instance, with the school in Australia.
- Continue to develop active participation of parents in liturgical, social and fundraising initiatives.

## Information about this school

- The school is a 1.5 form entry Catholic voluntary aided school in the locality of Westminster.
- The school serves the parishes of Our Lady of Sorrows, Paddington and Our Lady of Lourdes & St Vincent de Paul, Harrow Rd.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 51%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 11% and from other faiths is 10%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 67%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 21% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 6 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 89 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (39%).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	213 3381
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101124
<b>Local Authority</b>	Westminster

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	220
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Arthur Soares
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Alley
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7641 4326
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ourladydolours.co.uk">www.ourladydolours.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@ourladydolours.co.uk">admin@ourladydolours.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 June 2014
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Very Good
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	Very Good

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 8 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils, parish priest and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

## Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Deacon Anthony Clark

Lead Inspector

Mrs Deirdre Finan

Associate Inspector

## Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

### Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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