



Diocese of Westminster

INSPECTION REPORT

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infant School

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DFE Number: 304/3510

URN: 101547

Headteacher: Miss M. Shea

Chair of Governors: Mr R. Rowley

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: May 23rd 2011

Date of previous inspection: February 12th 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mr. Sean Flood

Description of School

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infant School is a voluntary aided two form entry Infant and part-time Nursery Catholic school located in the London Borough of Brent. The children come from a wide variety of social backgrounds and cultures. The school serves the Catholic community of the parish of St.Mary and St.Andrew in Dollis Hill. The school was opened in 1972 and was originally designed as a semi-open plan building. In May 2011 there were 232 children on roll including 52 part-time nursery places. There are currently 13% of children eligible for free school meals which is slightly below the national average. The number of children for whom English is an additional language is 51% which is very high and 74% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. A wide variety of languages are spoken in the school. 18% of the children are deemed to have special educational needs. Almost all of the children are baptised Catholics. All children admitted to the reception class are Catholic. There are at present 12 teachers in the school including the headteacher; all of these teachers are Catholic and 7 hold the Catholic Teachers Religious Certificate (CCRS) or its equivalent. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly comparable with children of the same age and backgrounds but many children enter the school with English as an additional language. Mobility is low in the school. The school encapsulates its vision and purpose in the phrase: "*We are learning to grow and love like Jesus*"

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infant and Nursery School is clearly an outstanding school in every aspect of its Catholic life. It is a warm, nurturing and very caring environment for young children to develop and learn in. The school takes Catholic education very seriously and gives it the highest priority. The excellent behaviour of the pupils, the quality of the curriculum and the dedication of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are noteworthy aspects of this school. There are opportunities from the very moment children enter nursery for spiritual and moral development and for learning about the teachings and life of Jesus. Prayer and worship are integral in the daily life of the school. Leadership is distributed very well across the school and the religious co-ordinator plays a very effective role in the success of religious education. Governors are well informed and supportive of the school. The school is very reflective and there is a joyful learning environment. This is an outstanding school and a great asset to the Catholic community of this area.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made outstanding progress on the two key areas identified in the previous report. Refined assessment systems are now in place and progress is tracked electronically for all children. Staff training and INSET has been extensive in developing assessment and planning. Marking is now of a very high standard and is consistently applied across the school.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school's own self-evaluation is concise and mostly presents an accurate portrayal of the schools strengths and key areas for future development. The whole staff, governors and

parents are committed to even further improvement in Religious Education. The school has a very strong and effective senior leadership team and clearly has the capacity to build on existing good practice. The governing body are very effective and carefully monitor the Catholic life of the school to ensure high standards. Strong links are also very evident in the close liaison and partnerships with parents. The school is in a very strong position to continue to thrive and prosper.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop further links within the local, wider and international community especially through the use of ICT
- Adopt a new whole school tracking system for religious education using Toolkit

Leadership and Management

The headteacher provides quite outstanding leadership for the Catholic life of the school. She leads by example. Her drive and determination ensures high standards and consistency of teaching. She is ably assisted by a strong senior management team and an outstanding and committed Religious Education co-ordinator. The governing body are very involved in a constructive and supportive way. The chair of governors is experienced and ensures that governors are kept well informed about the religious life of the school. There is a very experienced teaching staff in place who are united in purpose and are fully committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. Relationships at all levels are very good and the school ensures that there is close communication between the home, the school and the parish. Parents are happy and are very supportive of the Catholic life of the school in so many ways. The school has assessed itself as outstanding in this area and this inspection finds that overall leadership and management are indeed clearly outstanding.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer and worship are very good in the school and the children get ample opportunity to reflect and compose their own prayers. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school and helps with prayer and worship. Assemblies are happy occasions where the children are given time to worship and pray in a meaningful way and parents actively take part as well. A lovely assembly was seen celebrating Mary the Mother of God. All classes begin and end the day with prayers. Music is at the centre of worship in this school and this greatly enhances the worship seen. Music was evident in all classes and also in the assembly. All classes have a prayer corner and these are of a high quality with some lovely mosaic work on display. Displays in the school are of a very high standard and the artwork seen around the school enhances the sense of pupils' awe and wonder. Pupils are given opportunities for spiritual development and these are very appropriate to the pupils' ages and understanding. Time is regularly set aside for guided prayer and reflection. Moral education is very good in the school and even the very youngest children were given time to think and consider their answers in a sensitive, nurturing and caring way.

Grade 1

How well does the school/college promote community cohesion

There is a very real commitment to community cohesion in this school. There are good links with the local junior school and equally strong links with local non faith schools. The school is actively participating in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools initiative. Children choose the fundraising events to sponsor for local and world wide charities such as Cafod, Great Ormond Street, Mission Together, Shelter and many others. The choir regularly visit Candle Court Nursing Home. The school is actively seeking to forge closer links with the local Polish Church and also to use technology to forge closer global links. This is a key area for future development.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils enter the school slightly below the national average and a large and growing proportion of children have English as an additional language. Children leave at Key Stage One achieving well above the national average. The nursery gives children an outstanding start to their school lives and children produce quite beautiful Learning Journey books. Needs are quickly identified and early intervention programmes planned which actively involve parents. Teachers assess work to the learning objective, in line with the school's own marking policy. This includes a 'next step' comment which greatly assists pupil progress. Marking is highly evolved in this school and is of a high standard. Religious Education is taught through a range of activities, for example, drama and more especially through music and art. Children have all just contributed to a beautiful outdoor mosaic mural which has just been blessed by the bishop. There are high expectations of all pupils in the school and the school is fully inclusive to all children. Behaviour of the pupils is excellent both in class and at playtimes. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident through their behaviour with one another and the respect they show to everyone and also to the care they take of the environment. Children demonstrate good knowledge and understanding in Religious Education both through written work and oral contributions. The level of knowledge and recall seen in one year 1 class was quite outstanding. The children produce a wide range of work in Religious Education and are also taught about other faiths such as Judaism. Standards in religious education are very high in this school and children get an outstanding start to their journey of faith.

Grade 1

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching was at least good in all lessons seen with most being outstanding. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was outstanding which gives the children a great start to their school life. The staff are very committed and enthusiastic towards Catholic education which has a positive effect on pupil learning. They have good subject knowledge and are eager to develop the curriculum further. Planning and assessment are based on the requirements of the 'Here I Am' programme. Each topic is assessed to a very high standard and this informs future planning. Assessment in this school is exemplary and a model of good practice. The school is now seeking to record pupil attainment electronically and this is a key area for development. Support for children with SEN and for whom English is an additional language is effective and producing good outcomes. Pupils really enjoy their Religious Education lessons and are anxious to share their work with visitors. The school is involved in a Unicef project that encourages children to learn about rights

and responsibilities. A group of children were eager to share this work and speak about what they have learnt. One Year 2 child said that: "We are well listened to in this school and if we are stuck on work we are well supported". Quality of teaching and learning is audited regularly by management and the school is always seeking new ways to improve.

Grade 1

Quality of the Curriculum

The school is in full compliance with diocesan guidelines of 10% religious education teaching. The curriculum is carefully planned and delivered. The school follows and is fully committed to the "Here I Am" scheme. The Religious Education policy is clear, concise and is appreciated by staff. Planning is very good and highly detailed. The lesson plans presented are well set out with learning objectives being outlined at the start. Planning is well followed by all teachers. Clear assessment procedures are in place to ensure good consistency and progression. The school does teach about other faiths in particular about Judaism. Pupils state that they feel safe and secure and they experience good role models from all the adults they meet throughout the school community. The school's policy on inclusion and equal opportunities ensures all children have equal access to the Religious Education curriculum.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The headteacher provides excellent leadership of the Catholic life of the school. She is committed to high standards and good behaviour and achieves this in a very positive and life affirming way. She leads by example. The Religious Education co-ordinator is hard working and effective and her monitoring of planning, scrutiny of work and support of the curriculum has been exemplary in this school. Staff induction and training is good and morale overall is very high. The chair of governors is very well informed and he too makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Governors are kept up to date with developments and take a keen interest in the running of the school. The parish priests also play a very valuable and key role in this school. Overall leadership and management at all levels are outstanding.

Grade 1