



Diocese of Westminster

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery
Merryhill Road, Bushey, Herts. WD23 1SU
Telephone: 01923 493040
e-mail address: admin@sacredheart682.herts.sch.uk

DFE Number: 919 3415
URN Number: 117488

Headteacher: Mrs R Cooper
Chair of Governors: Mr M Chambers

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: 21st. May 2013
Date of previous inspection: 5th February 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan
Associate Inspector: Ms N Kane

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 ten lessons, attended two liturgies and carried out six 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 Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Bushey was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule 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.

Description of School

The school is a 1.3 form entry primary school with nursery in Bushey in the local authority of Hertfordshire. The school serves the parish of Sacred Heart and St John the Evangelist, Bushey, Bushey Heath and Oxhey. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 97%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 3%.

There are 310 pupils on roll, with 2 pupils who have a statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is slightly above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is below average. There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1: Outstanding;*
Grade 1: Very Good;
Grade 2: Good;
Grade 3: Requires improvement;
Grade 4: Causing Concern.

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

Overall Grade: I

The overall effectiveness of curriculum religious education is very good and meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory which forms the basis for the programmes of study, supported by the 'Year of Faith' units. The quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are generally very good. Pupils make very good progress through the challenge and expectations of their teachers. Effective structures are in place to ensure good quality teaching and monitoring. Self-evaluation is accurate and indicates a good knowledge of the school and the development areas for religious education. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and there are very good structures in place to support new members of staff. There is a commitment to on-going professional development to enable staff to improve and develop the teaching of religious education. The headteacher and the deputy, who is also subject leader, give religious education a high priority which permeates all aspects of the life of the school.

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?

There were three areas for development in the last inspection report. These were: to review the types of books used to record religious education work, to make them more special for the pupils; to continue to develop assessment and ensure marking is consistently applied across the school to inform pupils' learning; to develop an outside prayer area in the grounds to further enhance prayer and worship. The school has responded very well to all areas. Pupils' work books are now suitable for recording tasks and are very well presented. Assessment has been developed to include opportunities for pupils to self-assess. Marking is consistently applied across the school and informs pupils' learning. An outside prayer area has been developed and is well used to enhance prayer and worship.

To further improve classroom religious education in the light of the new framework, the school has identified that it should:

1. Agree and develop fuller understanding of the national levels of attainment to ensure staff plan assessment tasks which enable pupils to show understanding.
2. Continue to support and develop staff subject knowledge of religious education as they use diocesan materials to plan and teach.

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

Grade I

The content of curriculum religious education meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The four strands are used to very good effect and are clearly identified in lesson planning. The school is using the 'Year of Faith' units which are cross referenced to the areas of the Curriculum Directory being covered. Staff are very well supported by the subject leader in their medium term planning. She identifies the links to the Curriculum Directory and the resources used. There is regular monitoring of the curriculum, planning, workbooks and pupil learning. There is evidence of imaginative planning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils by including significant events which enhance pupils' learning. This year, the election of Pope Francis provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to learn about the structure of the hierarchy of the Church.

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

Grade I

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress in religious education are very good. Pupils enter the school around the national average and make very good progress from Foundation Stage onwards. This has been achieved by careful monitoring and tracking, a significant investment in resources, staff training and use of support staff. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards generally meet and sometimes exceed diocesan expectations. Lessons observed provided evidence of very well motivated pupils who are actively engaged in their own learning. Pupils make very good progress and are encouraged to become independent learners. They take pride in their work and respond well to their teachers' advice on how to improve. At Key Stage 2 a range of sources are quoted within pupils' written work including scripture, tradition, creation and experience. There is evidence that pupils are attaining a very good standard in knowledge and understanding of religion and are developing an ability to reflect on meaning.

The quality of teaching

Grade I

The quality of teaching is generally very good. Lessons observed across the school during the inspection gave evidence of high teacher expectations for all groups. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a wide range of strategies to engage the full range of ability. Workbooks are very well presented, marking is positive and developmental with questions to probe understanding and deepen knowledge. Class teachers use time well and pupils are given opportunities to develop new skills and build on previous learning. A range of cross-curricular activities including art, IT, and role-play are used to engage pupils in their learning. Tasks are appropriately pitched to enable pupils to express their religious literacy and there is very good challenge for more able pupils. Four teachers hold the CCRS certificate or equivalent. All teachers have good access to in-service training both in-house and provided by the Diocese. Regular monitoring of teaching is in place followed by discussion and support as necessary. Good assessment procedures have enabled teachers to plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Parents are able to support their children's learning through invitations to liturgies, class masses and other events, the 'Wednesday Word' and regular curriculum newsletters.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade I

The leadership and management of religious education is very good and has a positive impact on the life of the school. The subject leader is very well supported by the headteacher and all staff. Together they ensure that clear vision and direction for religious education is shared by the whole school community. The mission statement, 'At Sacred Heart we are a loving Christian family, who live and learn happily together and grow in the Catholic faith' is well known by pupils and often used as a prayer. School leaders ensure that very good support is given to new teachers and teaching assistants. High expectations for staff and pupils ensure that religious education is at the core of the curriculum. Staff are very well supported in their teaching through in-service training and frequent continued professional development. There is a good range of resources and the learning environment for religious education is very good. Religious education is given priority in the school improvement plan which clearly identifies areas for development and how they are to be achieved. Members of the governing body are familiar with current developments in religious education which enables them to support the school.

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 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 school is very effective in developing pupils' experience in the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The leadership and vision of the headteacher and subject leader are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are well planned and resourced. Religious education is valued and recognised as the core of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to reach their full potential academically, spiritually and morally by all staff. They are involved in the planning and preparation of liturgies as well as given opportunities to become involved in social justice issues. The governing body includes members who have a strong commitment to the school's vision of itself as a Catholic community. Good links with parents, parish and Diocese demonstrate the school's commitment to partnership and its clear identity as a diocesan Catholic school.

What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school?

Since the last inspection the school has made good progress on the areas identified. The outside prayer area has given pupils increased opportunities for reflection and meditation, and is well used. They have continued to be given many opportunities to contribute to school liturgies and class masses. Links with a school in Rwanda have given pupils additional opportunities to reflect on the Church's social teaching. All staff have been well supported as the school implements the new Diocesan Framework and the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. To further develop the Catholic life of the school, pupils should be given additional opportunities to write and include their own prayers in liturgical celebrations.

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

Grade I

Religious education receives 10% of curriculum time and has a similar budget as other core subjects. Resources are very good and there is a very good learning environment through attractive displays in classrooms and other areas of the school. Each classroom has a prayer table which is used as a focus during classroom prayers. School leadership offers strong support in developing and reviewing the quality of religious education. All staff receive in-service support and training relating to the Catholic life of the school. Members of the governing body have received training to enable them to provide support in reviewing and developing the place of religious education. The priest from the local parish liaises with the school for a planned programme of masses and liturgies.

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

Grade I

The school's provision for prayer and worship is very good. Pupils are given opportunities for prayer, meditation and reflection within the Catholic tradition and examples were seen during the inspection. Pupils are enabled to participate and contribute to a wide range of worship and would welcome further opportunities. The liturgical year forms the basis for many of the prayer and worship opportunities. During the inspection, two liturgies celebrating the significance of Mary were enacted by pupils and included prayer, music, drama and gospel readings. The concept of 'Caritas' was explored in the Key Stage 2 liturgy as they reflected on links with their own lives. Singing was very good and the school orchestra was used to great effect. All pupils participated with respect, reverence and enthusiasm. Religious education lessons often include prayers and sometimes end with a simple liturgy. Eucharistic celebrations are held in school or in the nearby church and the parish priest who is also a school governor is a frequent visitor to school celebrations and events. Parish led sacramental preparation is supported by the school. Pupils are engaged in the preparation of liturgies and masses which are part of the school's provision. Spiritual development is nurtured through the whole curriculum and religious education which permeates the wider life of the school. Parental questionnaires indicated that parents were very positive about invitations to Masses, liturgies and other school celebrations.

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

Grade I

The school is inclusive and emphasises the uniqueness of each person. The need to value diversity and show respect those from different backgrounds and cultures is demonstrated through the curriculum and includes a celebration of the European Day of Languages. The school has a very good understanding of the importance of service and support for those in need. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to support local and national charities including Cafod, Sport Relief, the local Peace Hospice as well as raising funds to support a school in Rwanda. They support the local lunch club for the elderly by providing entertainment at Christmas and help lead the Good Shepherd Mass at Westminster Cathedral with singing and orchestra. Conversations with members of the school council and older pupils indicate that they are given many opportunities to support their school, including as peer-mediators and play leaders. The school has achieved the Hertfordshire Anti-Bullying award and Year 6 pupils are trained as anti-bullying ambassadors. All pupils are growing in their understanding that responding to the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. Behaviour and relationships within the school are very good.

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

Governors, headteacher and staff see partnership between parents, school and parish as a central part of the school's understanding of itself with its immediate and wider community. Parish links are very good and pupils visit the church frequently for Masses and to deepen their faith and understanding. The school works closely with parents and carers through meetings and questionnaires, which indicate that families are appreciative of all that is done to enable their children to grow in faith. There are also very good links with the Diocese through participation in

training offered through the Westminster Education Service for both staff and governors. Senior staff attend diocesan conferences and have participated in deanery and diocesan moderation sessions.

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

Grade I

The leadership of the school is committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrates this by providing a curriculum with spiritual and moral development at its heart. Headteacher, subject leader, governors, and senior staff ensure that the Catholic life of the school is central to all its work. Pupils are given many opportunities to know the life and teachings of Jesus and the traditions of the Catholic Church. Leaders share a vision of the nature of Catholic education and work with staff, pupils and families to move the school forward. All aspects of school life are underpinned by the mission statement. Each class has an attractive prayer focus and a display area which emphasises the importance of religious education. Governors have a clear understanding of their role in safeguarding and promoting the Catholic life of the school.



Diocese of Westminster

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Bushey, Hertfordshire

Date of inspection: 21st May 2013
Reporting Inspector: Mrs P. Brannigan
Associate Inspector: Ms N Kane

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1: Outstanding;*
Grade 1: Very Good;
Grade 2: Good;
Grade 3: Requires improvement;
Grade 4: Causing Concern.

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade I

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?	Grade I
Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education	Grade I
The quality of teaching	Grade I
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education	Grade I

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 place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget.	Grade I
The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community	Grade I
The commitment and contribution to the Common Good –service and social justice.	Grade I
The 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
The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school.	Grade I