

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## St Mary's Priory Junior School

Hermitage Road, Haringey, London N15 5RE



Date of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade 2**

Religious education in this school is good. The requirements of the Curriculum Directory are met and form the basis of a scheme which is delivered in a way that makes the pupils keen to learn. Learning opportunities are good and link with the Catholic Life of the school; the pupils are taught how to make connections between what they learn and how they live. Lessons are varied and the children enjoy their work. Regular monitoring and moderation of work by the subject leader and senior staff along with the governing body ensure that pupils make progress and deepen their learning. Pupils get regular feedback on their work from staff. School data over the last three years shows a picture of improving attainment. Religious education is clearly at the heart of this school.

### 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 1**

St Mary's Priory Junior School provides its pupils and community with an outstanding experience of Catholic life firmly rooted in the charism of the Servite Order, who only recently passed trusteeship over to the Diocese. Pupils have a deep understanding of the social teaching of the Church which is shown through their relationships with each other and in their actions in the wider community. The school has developed thriving relationships with local Church of England and Muslim primary schools which have greatly enhanced the pupils understanding of their own faith. They are presented with an excellent range of prayer experiences from the Catholic tradition and show respect for the ways other faiths worship. The head is well supported by the leadership team and governing body and has established a school where all stakeholders feel welcomed and can share in the life of the church.

## 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 1 day in school, visited 8 lessons and 1 assembly, and carried out 4 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 St Mary's Priory Junior School, Haringey 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 Catherine McMahon  
Mrs Lisa Barton

Lead Inspector  
Associate Inspector

## Description of School

This Voluntary Aided School is a two-form entry in the LA of Haringey and the locality of Seven Sisters. The school is part of a hard federation with St Mary's Priory Infant School, which shares the site and was inspected at the same time. The school serves the parishes of St Ignatius, St John Vianney, and St Thomas More. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 85%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 14% and from other Faiths 1%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 89%.

There are 232 pupils on roll, with 2 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority 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. Ninety-three pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number: 3093503  
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Headteacher: Mrs Florence Collins  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Marva Hibbert

Date of previous inspection: May 2010  
Previous Inspection grades: 1

<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?**

The school has a good system for moderating its work regularly and makes full use of deanery and diocesan moderation to ensure that this is accurate and in line with national expectations.

Children learn how to evaluate their own work in order to improve and are supported in this by the staff.

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

#### **Grade 2**

The school meets the requirement of the Curriculum Directory as laid down by the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. Class timetables show that 10% of teaching time is given to religious education. All areas of the Curriculum Directory are covered and, in the better lessons seen, links were made between current work and that which had been covered in earlier units of work. There is clear evidence of the study of other faiths, as well as close cooperation with other local faith schools of different denominations.

The curriculum uses a range of resources and a variety of creative approaches to make the delivery of religious education exciting, including the employment of an artist who has helped the pupils produce impressive work. The school has invested in good quality resources, including appropriate Bibles, in order to enhance the learning of the pupils.

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

#### **Grade 2**

Pupil achievement in religious education is good. Teachers use the planned assessment tasks within the scheme of work and the pupils are able to assess themselves with appropriate levels of support. The classrooms display the level descriptors in order to help pupils recognise what they need to do to achieve these and explicit references were made to these in the most effective of the lessons seen. Regular moderation by the staff, led by the subject leader, with support from the senior team and diocesan advisor, means that attainment in religious education is increasing and becoming more in line with that in other core subjects. Pupils show a good knowledge of religious language; in one outstanding lesson, pupils were able to talk of the covenant between God and his people. They were able to list the four sources of revelation and, recognising that they were not all relevant to their current work, identify those which were. In another lesson, pupils could define a variety of words connected with the Sacraments such as "symbol" and "healing". They now need to develop their confidence in using this language. Pupils worked well during observed lessons with some good examples of group work where their positive "can do" approach was clear. Years 4-6 displayed their AT2 'Learning from Religion' work on The Big Questions on the display boards, discussing issues around Reconciliation.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 2**

Teaching is good overall, with some outstanding lessons observed during the inspection. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of the pupils, capture their imaginations and make the most of learning opportunities; in one outstanding lesson, pupils worked in groups to produce posters based around the sacramental principles and in another, a slide show to focus on creation brought gasps of wonder and awe from the pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers move the pupils along in their learning at a good pace and structure their input to help pupils complete their tasks to the highest level. Good questioning supports this. Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants whether they are working one to one with a pupil, with a group or interacting with the teacher during whole class teaching. One excellent example of this was when a teaching assistant modelled the task the pupils had been given, talking herself through the task with advice given by the teacher to help her improve her work. Marking shows that pupils are given feedback on the work they have completed and that they are being taught how to assess it themselves. In the better examples, next steps in learning are given but this still needs to be developed further throughout the school, especially for the more able pupils, to ensure that all children make as much progress as possible. Homework is evident as part of the learning in religious education and clearly takes a variety of forms. Some pupils had researched St John Paul II and made posters about him which were displayed in the classroom, while others had brought in objects from home to help explore God's creation.

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

### **Grade 2**

The leadership and management of religious education are good. The head, senior leadership team, subject leader and governors have a strong vision for the place of religious education in the school and across the federation as a whole and this is clearly communicated to other staff and stakeholders. The subject leader has worked hard to implement whole school strategies for improvement, for example, the new work introduced to support AT2, 'Learning From Religion', and there is evidence of an increasing consistency. The subject leader is well supported by the leadership team and governors who make sure that she has sufficient time to carry out her role across the federated Infant school as well as in the Junior school. She is able to support other staff in the delivery of the curriculum. School leaders, governors and the diocesan advisor carry out regular monitoring of religious education. The religious education link governor and chair of governors regularly carry out learning walks. The school is aware of the areas in which it can still improve and has already begun to address these.

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

- Continue to develop "next steps" marking in order to embed it throughout the school.
- Continue to provide challenge for the more able in all year groups to bring attainment more in line with that of other subjects.

## **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 school has continued to improve the already outstanding provision of experiences for its pupils. Worship and prayer are clearly strengths of the whole federation and weave seamlessly through the day from a morning session for all staff through to a class worship led and planned by the pupils themselves. Parents are welcomed into the school to share in celebrations on a regular basis and by sending home “The Wednesday Word” the school helps parents and families become a part of what is happening in the school.

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

#### **Grade 1**

It is clear that religious education is at the heart of this school. It has 10% of curriculum time and there has been a high level of investment over many years. This is shown by the quality of resources and displays evident in classrooms and around the school. The school's foundation as a Servite institution is seen in the grotto to Our Lady in the school hall and the beautiful mural in the entrance hall. The journey of the school community over the last 50 years is of obvious importance to all its members, and they are already planning for the visit of His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols to the school to mark this Anniversary. School leaders and governors play a pivotal role in ensuring the centrality of religious education. All staff, including the head teacher, have performance management targets relating to religious education and appropriate continuing professional development is made available to them. The link governor for religious education is a regular visitor to the school participating in its daily life as well as carrying out monitoring work.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The school provides its pupils with an outstanding experience of prayer and worship. Pupils of all ages prepare and lead high quality class worship on a regular basis; they are confident when doing this and see it as a privilege. Assemblies are led by pupils and by senior leaders each week. One of the School Chaplains spoke enthusiastically about the many Masses celebrated with the school during the liturgical year. As well as marking Holy days, he helps the children as they mark important events in their own lives, such as the Leavers' Mass and a First Communion Mass each year, bringing all the children from the various different parishes together for a joint celebration. With the Chaplain, the pupils also learn about many of the ancient and more modern saints of the church and are able to write and perform their own plays about them. The school has marked the beginning of the Year of Mercy with each class making their own “Door of Mercy” through which they enter their classrooms. These doors reflect the research carried out by the children on their chosen saint of mercy and again show a wide variety in their choices. Saints include Francis of Assisi,

St John Vianney, Vincent de Paul and Mother Teresa and the doors are decorated with their words as well as their images. The school chaplain blessed these doors.

Each class has a high quality prayer focus showing that considerable care and thought has gone into the choice and provision of resources to aid the children in their prayers. In some classes, the Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary were displayed in Spanish and the Stations of the Cross displayed, along with a "saint of the month" and with work by the pupils.

The school has developed a very close, reciprocal, relationship with St Ann's Church of England school. Not only do the pupils spend time in each other's schools, they also experience different styles of Christian prayer at the monthly "Praise" assemblies led by Anglican and Catholic priests. Similar links with The Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation School give the pupils the chance to learn about Islamic prayer and worship. Students from these schools are invited to experience Catholic worship, for example the Holy Week liturgy which included a real donkey; pupils from St Mary's in turn learn to take off their shoes when they enter the Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation School. In this way, the pupils at St Mary's have an excellent education as Catholics in modern, multi-cultural Britain. Staff across the federation have the chance for reflection and prayer through staff meetings and inset days also attended by members of the governing body and local clergy.

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

### **Grade 1**

The school's commitment and contribution to the Common Good is outstanding. Given their excellent participation in the local community, it is not surprising to see that pupils have a real understanding of the part they play in it. One commented 'We're never done with our work. Jesus didn't stop and we don't either'. The school supports many Catholic charities nationally such as The Catholic Children's Society and CAFOD. At Christmas, each class raised money and decided which of the CAFOD "World Gifts" they would spend it on; Year 5 boys were keen to include 'Fabulous Football' as well as a school starter pack. Locally, the school has been able to support individual members of their own community, sometimes with the help of Caritas. They also support national charities such as The Red Cross, Macmillan Cancer Care and Great Ormond Street. Pupils are able to make suggestions as to which charity to support. Pupils are aware of their call to action for justice. The School Council explained how they are happy to share their outdoor space with the Muslim school next door, as 'We should treat others as we want to be treated'. For the harvest festival, the pupils not only bring in contributions but then distribute them to the three local parishes and a local homeless shelter. The School Council spoke about the work the pupils do in the school; Buddies help supervise classes during wet play, Peer Mediators help to solve problems on the playground and all Year 6 become "Guardian Angels" to Year 3 when they join the school. The Junior school has just started using the Infant school lunch hall as a way of developing the links between the older and younger members of the federation. The very positive relationships this work fosters were clearly on display throughout the school. The school has many ways of recognising the contribution of all, with each class having a 'star of the week', house points for good manners and kindness, and 'best I can do' awards. The pupils appreciate the chances given for them to take on service in this way. One said 'We work together and have the opportunity to do different things'.

## **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**

The school has an outstanding relationship with parents and parishes. The school does not have a single parish church, but works well with all three of the parishes from which it draws the majority of its pupils. They are supported by clergy from these parishes, one of whom is also a member of the governing body. Some parents commented in their questionnaires that relations with one of the parishes are not as strong as they once were, but clergy from this parish are already addressing this alongside the school. Seventy-nine questionnaires were returned to the Inspection team and they were overwhelmingly positive in their support of the school and its leaders. One parent wrote, “St Mary’s has always helped my kids to make good choices by teaching good morals, as a result my children are honest and stable Catholics”. School masses and assemblies extremely well attended by the community. Parents also volunteer within the school and some have been supported to become teachers themselves. The school listens to its stakeholders, for example, holding an evening workshop for parents on the school improvement plan. Throughout the inspection strong, caring relationships were seen between staff and pupils and staff and staff. Children with extra needs were made to feel secure without being singled out; modelling the way Christ called us to look after each other. Pupils know that if they have any kind of problem, any member of staff would be able to help them. It is clear that the St Mary’s community is a community for life; the successes of a former student were shared with staff at their morning meeting. The school and governing body make full use of the resources available from the diocese, attending training and inviting their diocesan advisor into the school. The head and subject leader attend training and conferences and have begun the training to become associate inspectors. The head works with other Catholic leaders in the deanery and mentors other heads.

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

### **Grade I**

The school leaders, staff and governing body are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school. They fully recognise the role they play in bringing the mission of the church to their local community through the work of their school. This is shown in the school improvement plan where a priority is ‘to promote our schools within the community and show how we live the Gospels’. The whole community of St Mary’s shows that they live and act the Gospel values in every part of the school. The head and her team are committed to develop pupils who share their vision for discipleship and have an understanding of their role in modern Britain. Pupils recognise the opportunities and support they are given. One said, ‘school gives us the chance to be independent. Even though we might need help, they let us figure it out.’ Staff are also supported, with more experienced staff ‘buddying up’ with new staff. Governors play an important part in promoting this way of thinking and actively support and challenge the school in all that they do.

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

- The school should celebrate its outstanding practice in this area by making sure it is included on the school website.