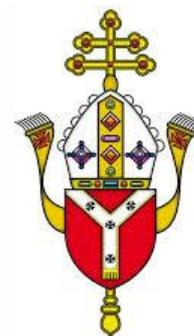


St. Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School

Clover Way, Gadebridge Rd, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 3EA

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 2 December 2021



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- St. Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School provides a good and varied curriculum based on the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and actively engages pupils in learning.
- Religious education programmes are structured to ensure progression and development; therefore, most pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attitude to learning is consistently positive.
- Overall, the typicality of teaching is never less than consistently good with some outstanding lessons.
- Teaching is effective in ensuring pupils are consistently engaged in their learning.
- Leadership of religious education ensures staff are well supported and teaching is monitored to ensure the highest expectations from all staff.
- Self-evaluation is accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development.
- The governor for religious education is actively involved, familiar with current developments and contributes positively.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The high-quality teaching and learning demonstrated in classroom teaching needs to be reflected in the quality of the work produced in pupils' books.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Pupils are offered a high-quality experience of Catholic life enabling them to understand what it means to live in accordance with Catholic teaching.
- Religious education is at the heart of this school through its status on the timetable and the quality of its teaching staff.
- Worship and prayer are central to life in school and pupils are offered engaging experiences of the richness of Catholic tradition.
- St. Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to human flourishing.
- Pupils clearly understand the theology underpinning their actions for social justice.
- The school demonstrates in a vibrant way its key relations with parents and staff.
- There are excellent systems in place to support new staff and to develop and enhance the contribution of all staff.
- Leadership is the driving force in the school's commitment to educating young people with a vision for discipleship for life. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the work of the Catholic dimension of the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection identified that teaching and learning could be further improved by ensuring teachers: provide activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities, use effective questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, and provide pupils with clearer advice on how to improve their work (and more opportunities to act on this advice). Inspectors observed that teachers' use of questioning in St. Cuthbert Mayne is highly effective, and therefore pupils' religious literacy is an outstanding feature. Orally in class, pupils demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics being covered and teachers were adept at pitching work to match ability. Pupils were provided with opportunities to strengthen their understanding.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The Curriculum Directory forms the basis of the content for religious education. The scheme 'Come and See' is used and is supplemented with teaching from Caritas themes. Inspectors saw evidence in books of lessons focused on other faiths. There is a creative approach in evidence, for example in an observed Year 5 lesson, pupils were engaged in an art focus, linking a painting to their learning on Advent. Inspectors also saw evidence of 'Be Spirited Day' work in a display in the main hall and pupils could explain the associated work. Pupils are also adept at using drama and role play in lessons as well as partaking in lively debate. Teachers in St. Cuthbert Mayne plan together and this is a strength; there is a good structure to ensure progression and development. Lessons are well pitched and engaging, however work in books is not equally developed.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils' achievement is good and there is evidence that progress is measured against the new diocesan standards document. Inspectors observed that teachers assess regularly in lessons as well as formally once a term. There was a high level of challenge in evidence in classroom interactions, resulting in a positive attitude to learning. The leader for religious education attends diocesan moderation to measure progress against other schools. Religious literacy is good, pupils demonstrate confidence in using religious language as observed in class discussion. Pupils attitude to learning is exemplary, they enjoy being challenged and justifying their answers. However, the high-quality learning that takes place in lessons does not translate to work in books. There were many examples of closed main class activities in books and challenging activities were 'hot challenges'. Inspectors observed that these 'hot challenges' were more aligned to work in class.

The quality of teaching is good

Inspectors observed teaching which is consistently good, and some outstanding lessons were observed where higher level questioning was used to probe and encourage pupils to delve deeper into their learning. In a Year 6 lesson looking at the concept of grace and salvation, pupils grappled with these abstract terms through peer discussion prompted by teacher intervention when required. The starter activity where pupils had to order the names attributed to Jesus according to importance, also produced some excellent class discussion. It was evident to inspectors that pupils in Year 6 are used to high quality peer interaction and are challenged at every level of learning. The teacher's subject knowledge moved learning forward and pupils used their Bibles effectively to discuss John 1:14-18. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were considering the work of the artist William Holman Hunt and reflecting on his painting 'The Light of the World'. This generated high quality discussion as pupils reflected on prior learning and used printed scripture to justify their opinions. Inspectors observed that in lessons, verses of scripture were more commonly printed and displayed on screen on interactive whiteboards. Had pupils been provided with more opportunities to use Bibles, learning could be extended even further.

High teacher expectations were observed and as a result pupils were excited to learn more about Isaiah and became thoroughly involved in their learning. Teacher subject knowledge helped to extend pupils' learning. Pupils were provided with opportunities to work with the teacher if they needed to have their understanding clarified; as a result, pupils were engaged and challenged at their own level, creating a positive climate for learning. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were creating their own 'big questions' when learning about the Annunciation and used these questions to generate debate. Pupils respond very positively to class discussion; they are respectful of others and are practised in how to offer contradicting opinions with integrity. This was also evident in a Year 3 lesson where pupils considered whether visitors are always welcome. Pupils could explain that they were studying Luke's infancy narrative and were all actively involved in their learning. During classroom teaching, assessment of learning is used to good effect and lessons are well planned taking prior learning into account. Pupils are used to very effective teaching strategies and this leads to a high level of learning in lessons.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

The leader of religious education consistently communicates clarity of purpose and is committed to ensuring high standards. Senior leaders work hard to ensure systems are in place to provide good tracking, so progression is mapped and monitored. Senior leaders also provide support and encouragement to teachers new to Catholic education by ensuring continuous professional development both in school and at diocesan level. New staff are exceptionally well supported in this area. Senior leaders have ensured that sound subject knowledge is developed, and this was evident in lessons observed during this inspection. There is clearly a shared focus on improving teaching and learning; the way practitioners used effective questioning techniques to challenge is testament to senior leaders' progressive work in this area. Teaching is monitored over time and results in a coherent and consistent approach across year groups. Self-evaluation is accurate, and clear strategies for improvement are already in operation.

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

- Ensure the high-quality teaching and learning demonstrated in classroom teaching matches the quality of the work produced in pupils' books.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection identified the need for strengthening systems still further for the formal monitoring and evaluation of the liturgical life of the school. During this inspection, it was observed that governors, including the parish priest, monitor the Catholic life and provide feedback. This is highly valued by senior leaders who use this alongside their own monitoring procedures to ensure continuous improvement.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding

Religious education receives 10% of curriculum time in this junior school. Religious education is at the core of the curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their religious education lessons. The governors, including the parish priest, offer outstanding support and together with the leadership team have created a very happy school where pupils flourish spiritually and deepen their understanding of their Catholic faith. The school supports staff to develop as practitioners in a Catholic school. The leader for religious education, together with the headteacher, are a driving force to ensure that religious education is at the heart of the school.

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

Leaders have worked hard to ensure that worship and prayer are central to life of St. Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School. Inspectors observed worship where the mood was evoked through the masterful performance of the school orchestra and further enhanced by the excellent singing of soloists. This attention to detail set the mood for Years 5 and 6 to reflect on Advent. The parish priest offers the sacrament of Reconciliation in school during Advent and Lent and celebrates the Eucharist at key times of the liturgical year thereby enabling pupils to participate sacramentally. Pupils had just celebrated the feast day of St. Cuthbert Mayne and were enthusiastic to discuss this celebration with inspectors. Pupils explained the story of St Cuthbert Mayne and discussed his martyrdom under Elizabeth I in a knowledgeable manner. Pupils are engaged in both the planning and preparation of prayer and worship. They can discuss how scripture is chosen to enhance worship and how it is important to pay attention to mood and setting. Pupils are reflective and adept at considering ways in which to further improve the worship experience for everyone, indicating that a culture of evaluation is integral to learning in this school. Pupils are offered a wide variety of forms of prayer and can integrate these into planned worship. In a Year 3 act of worship pupils demonstrated that they consider others as they made the sign of the cross on their own and on their partners forehead to set the mood and create atmosphere. Pupils are adept at creating a sense of belonging during worship and effectively use the diocesan format for worship. In an observed Year 4 act of worship, pupils rang a bell to indicate that worship was about to begin and reverently remembered those who had died. Pupils exhibited a good level of leadership and took time to offer opportunities for other pupils to reflect. One pupil reflected, 'I felt very calm during that act of worship'.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice – is outstanding

St. Cuthbert Mayne has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing'. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to celebrate their gifts and talents. This was observed during the act of worship in Years 5 and 6 where pupils played musical instruments to introduce worship. Pupils who wished to sing solo were encouraged to do so and add to worship with the gift of their voice. Singing as a community is celebrated in this very happy school. Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of their call to serve and were adept at justifying their answers by quoting scripture. Not only did pupils show a clear knowledge of the theology underpinning their actions, but they also contributed even further by reflecting deeply on scripture. Pupils demonstrated their knowledge during a discussion on the miracle of the loaves and fishes, considering what this miracle means for us today. Pupils explained to inspectors that they had a reverse Advent calendar and instead of receiving a gift every day during Advent, they gave a gift of food to the homeless, just as Jesus performed a miracle and gave the gift of food to the five thousand. Pupils also explained that they use the house system in school and each house has its own chosen charity to support. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting their chosen charities, as well as those in need in the local community through contributions to the local foodbank, nationally through donations to CAFOD and globally through contributions to Mary's Meals.

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

Inspectors met with parents in the playground before school and saw an analysis of the parental survey. The survey was overwhelmingly positive. Parents of pupils attending St. Cuthbert Mayne are very happy with how the school supports pupils' spiritual growth and religious education. Parents value the celebration of the Eucharist in school. They also value school communication and commented on how regularly the school communicated during recent lockdowns. Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with how well the school keeps them informed. The close relationship with the parish as well as St. Rose Infant school was considered by parents to be extremely important, and they expressed high satisfaction with how the school engages with various stakeholders. A parent of a child with additional needs expressed her gratitude towards the school for the inclusive way in which it managed her child's needs. She stated, 'I was worried that he may not be able to manage in mainstream school but the nurturing and love he received here gave him confidence to settle and thrive'. Parents feel included in homework and explained that as it is often research-based it provides opportunities for families to work together. A parent of a year 5 pupil enjoyed time spent at home researching Advent traditions in other countries and creating an Advent wreath. Another parent of a child with additional needs commented on how her child's prayers composed for homework are deeply expressive and meaningful. Yet another parent expressed delight at the way in which her child was able to quote scripture in a relevant manner when completing homework tasks. St. Cuthbert Mayne works closely with the parish priest who is a regular visitor in school. Together, both senior leaders and the parish priest promote ways for this community to actively engage in the shared mission of church and school. Parents appreciate being part of the diocesan community. The school actively promotes participation in services offered by the diocese.

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

is outstanding

Governors have reviewed the mission statement, 'Growing together in love and learning as followers of Jesus' and this dynamically expresses the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school. This mission statement has been linked to key drivers of P - protect our plant, R - resilience, A - aspirations,

Y - Yes to equality, and this is displayed in every classroom. Pupils were able to explain the importance of these key drivers to inspectors. The leader for religious education excels at enabling pupils and staff to experience the richness of opportunities of a Catholic way of living. Senior leaders are committed to the Church's mission in education. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of monitoring, analysis and challenge. There are excellent systems in place to support new staff as well as to develop and enhance the contributions of all staff. This is clear in the consistency of approach and high-quality dialogue in evidence in all classes during this inspection. Senior leaders are strongly committed to the religious education of pupils so that they develop a vision of what it is to be disciples for life. Governors share in the strategic leadership with energy and enthusiasm, and offer support and challenge to school leaders. They are generous with their time and have effective systems to receive views of parents, staff and pupils.

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

- Raise the profile of the school's Dominican heritage which is integral to the identity of St. Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School.

Information about this school

- The school is a 2-form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Hemel Hempstead.
- The school serves the Catholic parishes of Hemel Hempstead – East and West.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 89% (Nov 2021).
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 8% and from no religion is 3% (Nov 2021).
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 57%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 33 pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 4 have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) (Nov 2021).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is 35% (Sept 2021).
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 18.6% (44 pupils) (Sept 2021).
- The number of pupils on free school meals is 27 (11%) (Sept 2021).
- 29 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (12%) (Sept 2021).

Department for Education Number	843
Unique Reference Number	117468
Local Authority	Hertfordshire County Council

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	236
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maris Butchart
Headteacher	Mrs Fionnuala Smith
Telephone number	01442 253347
Website	www.cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3/6/2015
Grade from previous inspection	
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Good
The Catholic life of the school	Outstanding

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 5 of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils 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.

Ms Evelyn Ward	Lead Inspector
Mrs Yvonne Rutherford	Associate Inspector
Ms Caroline McGivern	Associate Inspector
Ms Carol Ransom	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>

Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005
E: nancyconoboy@rcdow.org.uk
W: <http://education.rcdow.org.uk>