



# Diocese of Westminster

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### **Divine Saviour Catholic Primary School**

Broomfield Rise, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire WD5 0HW

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DfE Number: 919 3410

URN Number: 117485

Headteacher: Mr Philip Gibbs

Chair of Governors: Mr Declan Lombard

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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

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Date of inspection: 17 January 2012  
Date of previous inspection: March 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mrs S Nolan

## **Description of School**

Divine Saviour Catholic Primary School provides for a one-form entry cohort of pupils, mainly from the parishes of Saint Saviour in Abbots Langley and Our Lady, Mother of the Saviour in Chipperfield. There are 236 pupils on roll, including those who attend the Nursery. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage but the school population also includes a small number of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. The majority of pupils are from Catholic families. Ten percent of the pupils have other Christian or other Faith backgrounds. Of the 14 full and part-time teachers, around 91 percent are Catholics. Five of the 14 staff teaching Religious Education hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) or other Catholic qualifications. An average proportion of the pupils have special educational needs and none of these 33 pupils has a statement of special education need. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable change among the teaching staff. The school rejoices in its well understood mission statement. 'Learn to live like Jesus through love, truth and understanding.'

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

Divine Saviour School provides a strong and vibrant Catholic ethos. The headteacher, throughout the period of staffing turbulence, has sustained very well the robust implementation of the mission statement in the daily life of the school so that the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is reflected in the school's harmonious relationships and the good behaviour of the pupils. Due to the change in staffing, particularly at senior level, the headteacher has taken responsibility for leading and managing Religious Education. This has ensured that pupils generally achieve well in Religious Education and in their personal development. Too much has depended on the headteacher to provide the vision, purpose and clear direction for the Catholic life of the school. As a result, the school is developing a pupil and staff chaplaincy team, not only to involve all members of the school community fully in the liturgical life of the school, but also to share some of the workload in the current circumstances. Staff, governors and parents work well together to do their best for the pupils and form close links with the wider community. This is exemplified in the way that parents are more involved in assemblies and liturgical celebrations and through activities such as the 'travelling crib'. Academic standards are at least average in Religious Education and similar to that in English although writing skills are sometimes stronger in Religious Education. Checks on children's performance and progress in Religious Education are carried out regularly through whole-school tracking procedures similar to those for literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there is still work to do to embed further the new assessment procedures, particularly given the turnover of staff. Pupils are helped to understand the Church's global mission through their support for many charities, particularly that for St Pius X School in Tanzania, and through their involvement in local projects both within and outside the school and within the parish communities.

**Grade 2**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the school was asked to involve pupils more in planning and organising prayer and worship. It was also asked to give pupils opportunities to respond to developmental marking and embed assessment procedures consistently across the school. The school has

responded well to these matters by focussing on the quality of marking and assessment as well as through the development of assessment portfolios for Religious Education. There has been a notable improvement in teachers' planning and the subsequent quality of teaching and in the quality of pupils' presentation of work. Levelling agreement meetings are well informed through the use of carefully graded pupils' work. Pupils are learning to respond in writing to teachers' comments in their exercise books. Likewise, pupils are beginning to contribute to the school prayer book which is in the process of development. The school has made good progress in the areas for improvement since the last inspection.

**Grade 2**

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

The headteacher, together with the staff, have been very successful in nourishing a school community that rejoices in a shared vision and an inclusive, welcoming ethos. Its members understand and strive to live out the mission statement in daily interactions with each other. The monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice and pupils' work in Religious Education is regular, accurate, and well used to identify priorities. The impact of the work to improve religious literacy is already evident in the improved writing in the pupils' 'red book writing'. Close parish links and good communications with other local and Catholic schools, particularly the neighbouring secondary school, support well the current drive for improvement. The involvement of the parish clergy, through regular visits for liturgical and other events, assists in embedding improvements in Religious Education. As a result, the school is set to sustain its current improvements and develop even more in the immediate future. The school has a good capacity to improve both the spiritual life of the school and the achievement of the pupils in Religious Education.

**Grade 2**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Further develop the work of the chaplaincy team so that they play an even stronger role in the daily liturgical life of the school.
- Continue to embed the tracking and assessment system for Religious Education so that temporary staff and those new to the school are rapidly at ease with the procedures.

### **Leadership and Management**

The Catholic life of the school is very well led and managed by the headteacher in partnership with the staff, governors and parents. There is a very positive and close relationship with the local parish as well as with neighbouring parishes. Staff have a good understanding of the nature of a Catholic school and the school community gives real assent to the school's mission. This has had the impact of creating a caring and compassionate ethos which makes pupils and their families feel welcomed and involved. Pupils' views are noted and valued so that pupils form very trusting relationships with adults and respond well to the prayer life of the school. Two pupils, for example, in South America, are kept fully involved with the school through the e-learning platform. The school knows clearly its strengths and areas for improvement. The school has taken on board the issues raised during recent inspections and continues to work assiduously towards their implementation, particularly with regard to assessment practice.

**Grade 2**

## **The Prayer Life of the School**

The Church's liturgical cycle is well woven into the life of the school. The provision for prayer life and collective worship is carefully planned and matched to the pupils' stages of development. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Children are increasingly involved in the planning of assemblies, prayer groups, liturgical events and Mass. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, used drama successfully to demonstrate the role of the Priest in liturgical celebrations. Older pupils were happily able to share their talents with their peers in the course of an assembly. Daily prayers and meditation in religious education lessons are well linked to the Church's calendar. The prayer tables in each classroom reflect the colours of the liturgical season and are given real prominence, helped by the colourful balloons reminding pupils of the current theme of Celebrations. The parish clergy regularly celebrate Mass in school and participate in services of reconciliation, and Lent and Advent liturgies. The chaplaincy corner in the main corridor is increasingly used for pupils to compose and contribute their personal prayers to the 'School Prayer Box'. Families are involved in the pupils' religious development through the family diaries, attached to the seasonal 'travelling artefacts' as well as through the regular news bulletins and events. Stimulating displays in classrooms and around the corridors provide children with further opportunities for thought and reflection. Traditions such as the rosary and Stations of the Cross are part of the school year and the school intends to develop more of traditional Catholic practice through greater use of the 'prayer garden', for example.

**Grade 1**

## **How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?**

The school strives very effectively to create a harmonious in-school community and contributes well to supporting cohesion in its local community. Pupils have good opportunities to enhance their experience of traditions other than those of their own families through visiting other Christian and non-Christian places of worship. Year 1, for example, in a recent visit to the village Church of Saint Lawrence, were able to note and discuss the differences with their own parish Church. Older pupils were able to talk about their understanding of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam and to identify with children from those faiths. Pupils are led successfully to understand their place within the Church's global mission. They are involved, for example, with a school in Tanzania and through imaginative corridor display are able to explore the Church's work elsewhere. Local links are strong and helped by activities such as the thriving breakfast club which involves pupils from another school.

**Grade 2**

## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

The achievements and standards in Religious Education are broadly average. Children make steady progress in Religious Education by the end of Year 6, similar to that in English. In discussion, and in their workbooks, pupils show a growing awareness of Catholic faith. Standards in written work in Religious Education are often higher than those in other subject areas. Children see their religious education work books as something special. Progression in understanding aspects of the Mass is good because of the helpful support of the parish clergy and the carefully constructed curriculum. Pupils, at their own levels, know the pattern of the

liturgical year, are gaining familiarity with rituals, and are clear as to what is expected of a Catholic community. They have a good grasp of traditional practices and are familiar with local saints such as St Nicholas Breakspear, proudly displayed in the school entrance. The pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is particularly strong and their behaviour is generally excellent.

**Grade 2**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons because of the wide range of activities they experience. Relationships between children and teachers are warm and constructive and contribute successfully to their obvious keenness to learn. The thoughtful use of periods of reflection and meditation were strengths of the lessons seen during the inspection. Year 6 tackled the difficult topic of our 'final destination' with great earnestness, exceptionally well supported by the teacher's sensitive and imaginative approach. Year 2 managed their meditation session well, inspired by the carefully prepared ambience and the visual images. Both communication and writing skills were encouraged through differentiated materials and expected responses. Well-targeted questioning, together with a classroom ethos that encourages queries and explanations, supports children's confidence in responding to important issues. Marking is generally encouraging and regular and teachers and pupils are beginning to develop a written dialogue over the quality of their recorded work in Religious Education. A notable strength of the lessons seen was the way teachers drew on a range of sources to underpin the messages for the pupils.

**Grade 2**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good. The well-resourced religious education department provides a curriculum which fully meets the diocesan requirements with regard to curriculum time. It is well supplemented by daily prayer and worship. Music and drama are used well to enrich pupils' experience and develop their understanding. The religious education curriculum aims to develop the whole child and, thus, makes an invaluable contribution to building the school community. Progression through year groups is helped greatly by the themed approach as in the current work on Celebrations running through year groups. Pupils have very good opportunities to study other religious faiths, not least through the weeks set aside to devote to other traditions. Pupils have a good range of practical activities that allow them to experience at first hand the practice of the Catholic community.

**Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

Religious Education at the school is well co-ordinated and managed, currently by the headteacher. Huge efforts have been made to ensure temporary staff are aware of what is expected of them as members of a Catholic community. Monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice, teachers' planning and children's performance and progress are rigorous. In this the headteacher is well supported by the link governor and other staff. Along with the core areas, the pupils' progress in the academic study of the Catholic faith is analysed carefully. The school has worked assiduously to consolidate teachers' understanding of attainment levels and to this

end holds agreement trials to moderate marking. In the well-kept learning environment, the school ensures that resources and staff are deployed very effectively so that all children are included fully in the religious life of the school.

**Grade 2**