



Diocese of Westminster

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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DFE Number: 312 / 3404

URN Number: 102425

Headteacher: Miss A. Shevlin

Chair of Governors: Mrs M. Thorpe

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: 9th July 2012

Date of previous inspection: 2nd December 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

Introduction

The inspector would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspector spent one day in school, visited five lessons and one collective worship, and carried out three 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, examination of school documents, and attendance at religious services where possible.

The Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Uxbridge 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 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 one form entry in the LA of Hillingdon and the locality of Uxbridge. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Michael in Uxbridge. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 88%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 8.5% and from other Faiths 3%.

There are 249 pupils on roll, with 4 pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is 50%. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 33% . There is an average rate of families claiming free school meals.

Key for inspection grades.

Grade 1: Outstanding;*
Grade 1: Very Good;
Grade 2: Good;
Grade 3: Satisfactory;
Grade 4: Causing Concern

A. Curriculum 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?

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

Grade [1]

The school has recently adopted a new religious education programme and all staff have been involved in mapping this to the Curriculum Directory. Where gaps have been highlighted, the staff have devised their own programmes and incorporated these within the curriculum. This very good preparation has both ensured teachers' firm knowledge of the Directory and that their new curriculum, now being implemented, fully covers all its areas and aspects.

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

Grade [1]

All pupils are gaining a growing depth of understanding of their Catholic faith and progress well in religious education throughout their time at the school. The standard achieved is high with pupils attaining or exceeding national expectations. During all lessons observed teachers encouraged pupils to link their learning to their responsibilities as Catholics. For example in Year 5 pupils discussed how Christians should relate to believers of other faiths, and show a deep care for all other people as "loved by God". Assessment is linked to the National Levels of Attainment and pupils' progress is tracked. Work is regularly undertaken to ensure accuracy of judgements. Data is analysed and any pupils not making adequate progress are identified and action taken. Pupils' books are very well presented and evidence a full coverage of the curriculum with a very good range of written activities.

The quality of teaching

Grade [1]

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding aspects. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and during their teaching encourage a personal response from pupils. For example, during a Year 6 lesson, pupils were challenged to consider the joys and challenges of various vocations and their group discussions revealed deep and mature thoughts. Teaching uses challenging questioning well to engage the interest of the pupils. Pupils working together effectively, stimulates and extends their ideas. Teachers differentiate tasks. This ensures that all pupils are challenged at the appropriate level. Marking of work is thorough, giving appropriate praise with questions to extend the learning. Pupils are given opportunities to respond and add improvements to their work, to achieve the learning objective. Pupils enjoy religious education especially when the tasks given are practical and linked to other areas of the curriculum such as to drama or ICT.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [1]

The leadership of religious education is at present undertaken by the headteacher and strongly supported by the senior management team and religious education governor. They have a clear, dedicated vision for the subject and support and guide staff very well. Three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS). Staff have undertaken intensive training both to become familiar with their new religious education programme, and to ensure assessment results are linked to future planning and pupil targets. Through this, teachers are becoming more effective in encouraging pupils to achieve the next level. Rigorous monitoring by the leadership, including the

RE governor, of work, planning and lessons, ensures standards are high. Evaluation and analysis of assessment data are effective in identifying areas for development. These are included within the whole school development plan.

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

The improvement action from the last inspection has been achieved and teachers are more familiar with the National Attainment levels.

To further improve in curriculum religious education the school should:

Embed the policy of linking lesson planning, marking and pupil targets to assessment levels so that pupils are challenged to progress to the next level and are more aware of what they should do to achieve this.

Ensure that lesson planning shows clearly which particular area or aspect of the Curriculum Directory is being taught.

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

Overall Grade: [1]

The school views itself as very good and the inspector concurs with this judgement. Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a very good rate. The standards achieved are high. Pupils are becoming more aware of how faith affects daily living. The place and importance of religious education in the life of the school is evidenced by the quality of the leadership of the subject, the commitment to high standards by all staff and by the very effective contribution this subject makes to the personal, spiritual and moral development of all pupils.

B. The school as a Catholic Community

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum - time, resources, budget

Grade [1*]

Religious education is very important in the school evidenced by the subject receiving at least 10% of curriculum time; by the very high budget given to it, relative to other core subjects; and by the many high quality RE displays. The school is very well resourced for religious education and its Catholic identity. Religious education is given a high priority in both staff and governors' meetings. For example, the school leadership ensured thorough consultations took place with all in the school community before the new, more rigorous religious education programme was implemented. Regular training takes place linked to RE and the Catholic life of the school, sometimes provided by the parish priest, such as his leading the staff and pupils to deeper understanding of the new Mass setting.

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

Grade [1]

Prayer is an integral part of each school day. Pupils enjoy writing their own prayers and have all composed a peace prayer linked to the Olympic values. They are developing a growing awareness of situations in the world-wide Catholic Church as exemplified by a pupil suggesting a prayer for persecuted Christians in Afghanistan. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned to ensure variety of experiences of the Catholic tradition of worship. The May procession is a favourite for pupils, parents and staff. The whole school regularly attends Mass in church and in school. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the school's sacramental life. Pupils have the opportunity of reconciliation on two occasions each year. They are very respectful during worship, participate with sincerity and reflect thoughtfully on the theme. Pupils' high quality of singing powerfully enriches the occasion, as was demonstrated by the enthusiastic singing and lively actions of the Early Years' children. Pupils are actively involved in leading worship and are keen to plan and prepare their own class worship.

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

Grade [1*]

Pupils are very aware of the importance of service to others and explain that through their Catholic faith of "following the way of Jesus" they are learning to have concern for disadvantaged people. Pupils are beginning to communicate their beliefs in social justice to others, for example, they explained their perception of Catholic life to pupils from a local non-faith school. Pupils enthusiastically raise money and chose the charities to support. They willingly undertake a variety of responsibilities for example as prefects, members of the school council, and playground buddies. The school celebrates achievements of effort, attitude and behaviour. Individual gifts are valued, such as a talented musician playing in assemblies. In these ways the school contributes extremely well to pupils' confidence, well-being and self-esteem. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils appreciate the friendliness of staff who listen to them and help with problems.

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 [1*]

The school has excellent links with parents who appreciate their welcome and the moral dimension of the curriculum. A weekly newsletter to parents reflects on the Sunday Mass and encourages parents to share activities with their children. The school has very effective links with the parish, whose members are extremely supportive, contributing to the purchase of the new religious education programme. The parish priest is a very regular visitor to the school liaising with staff and pupils and recently acting as goalie at the school fair. The school works in partnership with the diocese through accessing their training and their guidance. Pupils and staff attend diocesan and deanery events. The deputy headteacher has organised a Catholic deputy heads group in Hillingdon. The school is working in partnership with the diocese on the "Building on History project".

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

Grade [1*]

The school leadership, including governors, are fervently committed to the Church's mission in education. They have a clear vision and engage and inspire staff and pupils in implementing and developing the school's Catholic ethos. The mission statement is known well by pupils who can describe the school values that underpin it. The leadership understands very well the school's strengths and development needs, through their thorough and accurate self-evaluation. Governors fulfil very well their responsibilities and are very supportive. The school's capacity to continue to maintain and promote its Catholic identity is outstanding.

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 outstanding inspection the school has not remained complacent but has continued to improve.

To further develop the school's Catholic life the school should:

Engage pupils more in planning and presenting their own acts of class worship.

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*]

The Catholic identity of the school is pivotal to school life. This is evidenced in the very high priority attached to pupils' faith development. The many high quality and attractive Catholic displays including pupils' prayers, strongly establishes the school's Catholic ethos. The school views itself as outstanding and the inspector concurs with this judgement. The powerful leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, with strong support from the governors, is instrumental in very effectively developing the Catholic identity. Prayer and worship have a very strong central role in school life. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and firmly linked to their Catholic faith in action. This is reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to service for others.