



St George's Catholic Primary School

Sudbury Hill, Harrow HA1 3SB

Date of inspection: 20 June 2014

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade I

The religious literacy of the pupils is very good and they are becoming aware of how their Catholic faith affects their daily living. The curriculum is based on the delivery of the Curriculum Directory supported by 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme of work. Pupils make very good progress in their subject knowledge of the Catholic faith through the challenge and expectation of their teachers. Attainment is very good and is in line with, and sometimes exceeds, diocesan expectations. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when discussing their own ideas and opinions and when undertaking practical activities to consolidate their learning. Pupils display a growing depth of thought which impacts very well on their spiritual and moral development. All staff are fully committed to the very high profile given to religious education and willing to undertake training to improve their skills. There is evidence of very good planning of learning. Lessons have clear objectives and success criteria which enable pupils to effectively assess their own learning and so know how to improve. Leadership of religious education is effective and developing; the school's self evaluation is achieved through regular monitoring and provides evidence of an accurate awareness of the strengths of the department.

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*

St George's Catholic Primary school School is an outstanding Catholic school. The vision of the headteacher, school leadership and governors, supported by local clergy, are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are well planned and resourced. The school is highly effective in maintaining and developing the school's Catholic identity, and in impressively fostering pupils' growing awareness of their Catholic faith and their understanding of how to live this out in their lives. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes. They have very many opportunities to develop personal responsibility and engage in action to support those in need locally and in the wider world. There is an appreciation of being part of the local deanery and diocese of Westminster. Governors offer strong support in developing and reviewing the quality of the Catholic life of the school. Relationships within the school community are outstanding as is the pastoral care provided to support individual needs.

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 15 lessons and 2 assemblies, 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 George's Catholic Primary School, Harrow 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 Jane Goring
Miss Tracey Peters

Lead Inspector
Associate Inspector

Description of School

The school is a two form entry primary school in Harrow. The school serves the parish of St George's Harrow. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99.5%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 0% and from other Faiths 0.5%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 95%.

There are 473 pupils on roll, with 5 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. 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 below average rate of families claiming free school meals. 8.7% of pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number: 3103508
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Headteacher: Mrs D Monaghan
Chair of Governors: Mr M Power

Date of previous inspection: November 2008

Key for inspection grades:

<i>Grade 1*</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Very Good</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?

Since the last inspection the school has addressed the identified action points.

- Tracking systems and procedures have been developed. Teachers now complete half termly assessments, with pupils completing tasks directly related to the themes and topics studied; this work is levelled and results are shared with the child and the parents. Marking has developed and children are given direction of how to further improve. There is termly internal moderation of work and the religious education coordinator attends regular deanery moderation meetings.
- The school continues to explore and develop ways to differentiate pupils' work which can be evidenced in pupils' books and teachers' planning. There has been training from a variety of providers, including the diocese, and the school has hosted training on differentiation for other schools.

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

Grade 1

The content of curriculum religious education meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The school currently uses the scheme 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' as its core curriculum content and maps this scheme to the Curriculum Directory, supplementing where necessary with resources from other curriculum projects. These highlight ways in which the needs of the pupils can be met with imagination and creativity and so aids both long term and short term planning, ensuring that topics are revisited and developed appropriately as pupils move up the school. Examples of very good and imaginative planning were seen in all classes and there is evidence to show progression and depth of provision in the pupils' books. The school is aiming in the near future to look at additional resources in order to further enhance and update the teaching of religious education and reflect the increasing diversity of the pupil population.

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were challenged to think spiritually, ethically and theologically. All lessons were well planned and there was a variety of resources used, including ICT. During the inspection a very imaginative lesson on Buddhism was observed, where groups of pupils each made a model shrine, choosing appropriate artefacts from a selection. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and have high expectations of the pupils; they successfully engage learners and deepen their understanding. There are excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, creating a learning environment where the pupils feel safe to express their views and pupils have a good awareness of the demands of being a Christian in today's world. The emphasis on teaching and learning and sharing ideas across the school is contributing to improvement in pupil achievement.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade I

The leadership and management of the religious education department is very good. The newly appointed head teacher is very focused on delivering high quality religious education lessons and an imaginative curriculum in her school. Self evaluation was accurate and strengths and weaknesses in classroom religious education were clearly identified. She is well supported by a newly appointed religious education coordinator who has already made a significant impact. There is a sense of common purpose with good practice, shared both formally and informally. All staff are supported well and there is a feeling of shared responsibility with regular discussions which focus on improving teaching and learning through the development of an increased variety of resources, although there is a need for further development in differentiation. There is moderation across the school and with other schools in the deanery. The link governor for religious education is both supportive and challenging. Accommodation is bright, cheerful and more than adequate for purpose.

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

- Continue to develop and embed an effective and consistent tracking procedure, with accurate target setting and a secure understanding of the levels of attainment so that any pupil underachievement is quickly identified.
- Differentiation is evidenced in planning but needs further refinement to ensure that each pupil reaches his/her full potential.

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?

There was only one action point for the spiritual life of the school

- Plans for the outside prayer garden have been implemented to create a beautiful space for private prayer and reflection as well as class liturgies. The school has also developed a memorial garden, also designed by pupils, to remember parents and relatives of pupils who have passed away.

In addition:

- The recently appointed headteacher has led a review of the Mission Statement, which included staff, governors and parents. The new statement is 'Loving and serving God, as we prepare ourselves for the future'
- There have also been a variety of events to deepen partnerships with parents, including evenings to help them support their children in preparing for Advent, Lent and Pentecost as well as newsletters and prayer sheets.

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

Grade I*

There is a generous budget for religious education which this year exceeds that of English and Maths. The number of Catholic staff is very high and accommodation is outstanding with attractive displays and prayer tables which reflect the Church's year and are used as a focus during classroom liturgies. The Governors and the school leadership offer outstanding support to religious education which plays a central role in achieving the mission of the school. Religious education receives 10% of formal curriculum time across the Key Stages and so meets the requirement of the Bishops' Conference.

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

Grade I*

The school's provision for prayer and worship is outstanding and a key part of every school celebration. Prayer and worship are central to the daily life of the school through class prayer times and assemblies. In addition, pupils are given frequent opportunities for spiritual development through reflection. Year 6 pupils act as 'Prayer Buddies for the First Communion children in Year 3. Liturgies are creative and imaginative and pupils are engaged in the planning and preparation of worship, including writing their own prayers, choosing the readings and hymns. Mass is celebrated in school when possible and in the parish church. The priest from the local parish visits regularly to talk to classes and prepare liturgies and a member of the parish team facilitates prayers with the children in school; this is especially powerful when other members of the parish come in to pray the rosary in May and October. One assembly seen during the inspection was prayerful but also a joyful celebration of the successes and variety of talents of the pupils. Parents and families are increasingly invited to masses and class assemblies and appreciate the opportunity this gives them to become involved in the prayer life of their children and the school.

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

The school's commitment to the Common Good is outstanding. It is a welcoming community and there is real respect and support for every individual child. The behaviour of the pupils is excellent, evident through the warmth and confidence with which they engage with each other, with their teachers and with visitors. Pupils of all ages have a very good understanding of moral issues and there is a sense of reaching out into the community. Pupils are expected to develop their considerable gifts and talents and to be of service to others; they willingly take on roles such as Prayer Buddies, playground pals, house captains and members of the School Council. A wide range of charities chosen by staff and pupils include support for the Catholic Children's Society, a nursery in Malawi, Water Aid and they are now concentrating their efforts on Guide Dogs for the Blind, The pupils clearly understand the theology which underpins their service to those less fortunate than themselves. The school ensures that pupils understand the call to justice and a sense of service are essential parts of their Catholic identity.

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*

There is a very strong commitment among senior leaders and staff to the school's mission as a Catholic school within the Diocese of Westminster. Leaders and managers at all levels, along with governors are regularly involved in diocesan events. The priest from the local parish is invited into school and other members of the parish are active in supporting the children on their faith journey, thus developing deeper relationships with the whole local community. Staff regularly attend diocesan training and the religious education adviser is a welcome visitor to the school. The school hosts deanery meetings on teaching and learning. The parental questionnaire showed that parents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the contribution by the school for the continuing faith formation of the children. They strongly agreed that the school is both welcoming and supportive, whilst being very efficient and empathetic to their concerns or queries. There was also very strong agreement in how the school supports both the progress of their children and the quality of its provision as a Catholic school.

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

Grade I*

The leadership of St George's School is outstanding; the leadership team and governors have high aspirations for the school as a Catholic community and a passion for school improvement. They demonstrate this by providing a curriculum with spiritual and moral education at its heart. Catholic life is central to the work of the school and leaders ensure that all aspects reflect the richness of a Christian way of life. The headteacher ensures that all staff have the skills and opportunities to contribute to the Catholic life of the school and there are excellent systems in place to support staff. The Catholic ethos is woven throughout the whole school and manifests itself in shared vision of the leadership team; this then permeates the school community at all levels. The pupils have a strong sense of this ethos and feel that they are part of the community – all have a contribution to make and feel valued. The Governing body understands its strategic role and is effective in carrying out its duties.

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

- Develop School Chaplaincy Teams to allow the children to enhance the spiritual life of the whole community.
- Develop further opportunities for parents to participate in the Catholic life of the school.