

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Holmes Rd, London NW5 3AH

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 8 December 2016



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The religious education programme taught at St Patrick's fully conforms to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Improvements suggested for the teaching of religious education by the previous inspection have been well followed up.
- The pupils are making good progress in religious education.
- The suggestions for thinking more deeply about religious matters are being taken up effectively by the pupils.
- The teaching of religious education in the classrooms is outstanding.
- The teachers are giving high priority to preparing very good religious education lessons.
- The school is providing good leadership and management of religious education teaching.
- The governors make religious education a high priority and take a great interest in seeing that it improves.
- The particular needs of the pupils who attend St Patrick's are carefully analysed and responded to in its religious education teaching.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- More teachers should be encouraged to study for higher qualifications in the teaching of religious education.
- Ways of recording the insights and higher order discussions which the pupils have in class should be explored.
- Further teaching initiatives should be developed to enable more pupils to reach Level 5.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- There is a strong commitment to St Patrick's identity as a Catholic school among pupils, staff and parents and they are proud of its long history as a Catholic institution.
- St Patrick's school understands and ensures that religious education is at the core of its curriculum.
- It devotes at least 10% of curriculum time to religious education in line with the recommendations of the Bishops' Conference.
- Provision for the liturgical life, collective worship and prayer is excellent and pupils plan, prepare and participate joyfully in worship.
- The school gives outstanding encouragement to pupils to experience diverse ways of praying.
- The pupils learn generosity and service to others as they learn what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- Pupils know and understand the Gospel call to justice and service from a local, national and international context.
- The school is distinctive in its clarity of analysis of the background and cultural needs of its pupils.
- There is an excellent and cooperative partnership of the school with the local parish.
- The parents are closely involved in the life of the school and bond with it deeply.
- The leadership of the school together with the governors are very effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection recommended that the school should continue to focus on raising levels of attainment, particularly at Key Stage 2, through careful tracking and individual developmental feedback. It also recommended that the school should enrich provision to include experiences of the traditions of the Church and contemporary Catholic life. The school has fully met these recommendations. It has introduced a more challenging curriculum, with greater reference to scripture. It has focused on the ongoing support for the teaching of religious education (RE), enabling teachers to maintain raised levels of attainment. Individual tracking and developmental feedback have been achieved by careful use of next step questions in green at the end of marked pieces of work in the pupils' books. The focus on the traditions of the Church has been achieved in a number of innovative ways, including renaming of the classes with saints' names and celebrating their feast days. In the prayer and in the acts of worship there is positive reference to contemporary Catholic life via regular discussion of current affairs, the sayings of the present Pope and engagement with pupil contributions.

The content of classroom religious education is good

A systematic programme of study has been adopted by the school which focuses closely on links with and conformity to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). Religious education and Catholic life are central to focus and ethos of the school. All subject teaching is influenced by this vision of the curriculum. The specific areas of the RECD are covered and carefully tracked in the teaching units including Revelation, Church, Celebrations and Life in Christ. Teachers' professional development includes a specific focus on the links between the teaching programme and the RECD, and the resources needed to embed this are made available. As well as ensuring the pupils are taught what they should know about a topic (AT1 - Learning about Religion), the classrooms have areas to display 'The Big Question' so that pupils are led to wonder and muse about what it all means (AT2 - Learning from Religion). There is a clear focus on the place and importance of scripture and the pupils demonstrated familiarity with biblical texts and stories appropriate to their age.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement overall is good and pupil progress, which is measured against school's own internal systems as well as diocesan moderation, is good. Pupils enter the school below the national average and leave mostly at or above age expectation, demonstrating that progress is good. Attainment is generally at least as good as other core subjects. In Nursery, children have a secure and nurturing environment which enables them to flourish. This is continued very well into the Reception class. In Key Stages 1 and 2 achievement is good in all classes with some outstanding examples in Key Stage 1. Further teaching initiatives are needed to enable more pupils to reach Level 5. Achievement is securely good over time as evidenced by a scrutiny of previous year's work. Pupils' attitude to learning, including individual work, group and whole class work, is consistently positive and has an impact on the progress they make. Pupils know and understand what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils' religious literacy is good and they are confident in their use of religious language. Pupils are taught about other faiths such as Judaism and Islam.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

The quality of teaching across the school is judged to be outstanding and never less than good. As a result almost all pupils make rapid and sustained progress over time. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. This is evidenced in pupil responses to searching questions. Teachers impart religious knowledge with creativity, confidence and authority to ensure pupils are engaged in learning. Marking and constructive feedback is frequent and this enables pupils to understand the next steps in learning. Higher order questioning is used to stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding. It was clear that pupils were being extended in the breadth and depth of their insights, though they were not sufficiently encouraged to appreciate, record and retain their new learning. Teachers used a variety of teaching strategies to match pupils' learning needs. There was evidence of careful analysis of the characteristics of the pupil cohort and their specific teaching needs. Appropriate homework is regularly set. Weekly sharing of topics and outcomes at the staff meetings are enabling teachers to improve and make more specific their strategies for engaging the pupils more actively in their learning. The pupils were vocal in their appreciation of RE lessons and were absorbed in their learning and reflections in RE.

The leadership and management of religious education are good

The headteacher, the senior leadership team (SLT) and the governors have a clear vision for the teaching and development of religious education in the school. As well as thoroughly adopting and adapting the published religious education programme the school has chosen, there has been a sustained attempt to analyse and respond to the specific character and needs of the pupils who attend St Patrick's, ensuring their cultural and social situations are taken into account. The RE coordinator and SLT regularly monitor the teaching and learning of RE through lesson observations, book scrutinies, pupil voice and dialogue with parents. The parish priest visits the school regularly and he is able to provide useful insights into the pupils' educational progress and need. The commitment to regular moderation meetings, to professional development and to RE items on staff meeting agendas, mean that planning for RE lessons and approaches are responsive and anchored in the needs of the pupils. The governors ensure they receive regular reports on RE matters and outcomes, and provide clear guidance at the governance level on maintaining and improving RE provision. One way in which governors have developed their understanding of RE is by occasionally looking at pupils' books with the pupils and listening to their comments.

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

- Develop creative ways of ensuring pupils are helped to remember the insights gained through verbal dialogue and higher level questioning, perhaps recording this in written notes or by using other media.
- Continue to develop the theological knowledge base and competence of teachers through promoting the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and other Catholic qualifications.
- Develop further teaching initiatives to enable more pupils to achieve Level 5.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

In relation to the Catholic life of the school, the previous inspection recommended that there should be enriched provision to include experiences of the traditions of the Church and contemporary Catholic life. The school has fully responded to these recommendations. It is giving pupils good experiences of the traditions of the Church, including various liturgies, different prayer styles, pilgrimages, use of scripture and increased knowledge of the saints. Sacramental preparation takes place in the school at the end of school day once a week. Pupil-led collective worship happens in each class at least once a week. The school responded very positively to the Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis, instituting a door of mercy, and finding a variety of ways of helping people with corporal acts of mercy. The school is engaging in a project on promoting mental health and linking that to the Year of Mercy.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The school makes religious education the core of the curriculum in a great variety of ways. In all its planning it looks to see how religious education can be enhanced, whether in terms of the use and development of space next to the playgrounds or in the use of room space and corners within the buildings. The programmes to induct newly qualified teachers emphasise the vision of the school that all subjects flow from the core Catholic identity of the school and that religious education is the core subject. In practice, these values and expectations are demonstrated by the way it plays its role in the Catholic community, in the local community in Camden, in the provision of education in the diocese and in its support of diocesan initiatives and priorities. The school gives a high profile to the parish priest who is a school governor and link governor for RE. The school fulfils the expectation of the Bishops' Conference that at least 10% of curriculum time is given to RE as well as ensuring the subject receives a similar budget share as English, maths and science.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are outstanding. The centrality of prayer and worship in the life of the school is obvious in the prayer areas and displays. For example, at the school entrance is the mission statement 'Helping us to grow like God' asks the question – How can following the virtues help you support the Mission Statement and its values? An excellent example of best practice was the prayer opportunity at the beginning of the day. This was an affirmation of the Catholicity of the school. The headteacher has a vision for his school, shared with the SLT and governors, which puts the Eucharist at the centre. The Mass attended by the inspectors was a joyous celebration engaging the pupils in planning, preparing and delivering. As one of the oldest Catholic schools in London, an important facet of the school is its Catholic history, from its establishment in Soho in 1803 to the move to the present site in Kentish Town. The school's history reflects London's history and this was celebrated at this Mass, effectively demonstrating the significance of the generations of pupils educated in their faith at St Patrick's. One of the ways in which the Year of Mercy was celebrated was a pilgrimage to St Patricks, Soho, the school's original site. One of the pupils said 'We went on foot because it was a holy journey'. The pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through the excellent opportunities that these children are given for quiet reflection, sharing and discussion. The parish priest supports the school, visiting the school frequently, leading prayer groups, class liturgies and Masses.

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

are outstanding

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good is outstanding. As a result of the vision for the school, which has been shared with all stakeholders, pupils know and understand the Gospel call to justice and service from a local, national and international context. For example, a Year 3 child said 'We want to be like Jesus by doing the best for others and thinking of others'. The children have respect for their own and others' cultural backgrounds. Their behaviour was excellent and the children show respect for and value each other. They have been enabled to develop their talents. For example the Year 6 pupils prepared a presentation on 'Laudato Si' for younger children simplifying it to help with understanding. They have supported in the Nursery to help children socialise and make Christmas baubles. The children are actively engaged in acts of service to help others and they know why they are called to do this. Locally they are involved with a homeless project, nationally with Wateraid, Cafod and McMillan. A particular project was to collect books for libraries in Africa.

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

is outstanding

The school is unremittingly diligent in enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese of Westminster. The school works hard to maintain the strong and purposeful partnership it has with its parents and carers, especially in its efforts to understand the social and economic influences that bear up them. Parents are engaged and supportive of the school, whether on the social and fund raising front or in connection with their children's progress and learning. The tradition of saying a prayer and singing a hymn in the playground when they bring their children into school in the morning is especially noteworthy. There is a very close partnership with the local parish and effective collaboration with the parish priest. The parish church is used regularly as a local resource, whether in the teaching of RE or in other subjects such as during 'Maths Week'. The school participates fully in the local moderation meetings as well as attending diocesan training and conferences.

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

is outstanding

The leadership is outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of St Patrick's. The headteacher and SLT have a very strong vision of the Catholic nature of education. The governing body is clear in its role of being the rock upholding the Catholic nature of the school. The school motto is at the heart of all the teaching programmes and school policies 'Growing in God's love'. Staff are introduced to the school's ethos and values well, and there is a sense of unity in supporting the vision of the school.

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

- Continue to develop and expand on the variety of prayer experiences in partnership with the pupils.
- Look to finding more opportunities to help pupils reflect on the meaning of their diverse life-experiences in the light of Christ's message of hope.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Kentish Town.
- The school serves the parish of Our Lady Help of Christians, Kentish Town.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 56%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 31% and from other faiths is 10%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 75%.
- There are 25 pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 5 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic 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.
- 112 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (49 %).

Department for Education Number	2023560
Unique Reference Number	100045
Local Authority	Camden

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	226
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Margaret Harvey
Headteacher	Mr Sean Cranitch
Telephone number	020 7267 1200
Website	www.stpatricks.camden.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stpatricks.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2011
Grade from previous inspection	Good

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 one assembly and two acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents with a meeting and 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.

Deacon Anthony Clark

Lead Inspector

Mrs Dee Abbott

Associate Inspector

Mrs Elizabeth Nye

Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

Published by the Diocese of Westminster

This publication is available at: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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