

Cardinal Pole Catholic School

205 Morning Lane, Hackney, London E9 6LG

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 13 and 14 October 2016



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The headteacher and school leaders have a coherent and consistent vision for Catholic education and the mission of the school in the local community.
- The subject leader and team are relentless in the regular moderation of students work.
- All groups of students make outstanding progress from their starting points due to strategic targeted interventions.
- Students are consistently encouraged across all key stages to evaluate and reflect on the deeper significance of religious belief and practice.
- Marking and feedback is very effective and leads to rapid progress.
- The curriculum is creative, dynamic and engaging and resourced very well.
- Religious education makes a strong contribution to the Catholic life of the whole school.
- The extracurricular support offered to students to engage with scripture and to reflect upon their faith is a great strength of the school.
- The introduction of the 'Restorative Justice' programme is visionary and has greatly contributed to the atmosphere of Cardinal Pole School being a place of learning with a real focus on the quality of relationships between students and with staff.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The distinctive inclusive ethos of this school is tangible in every area of the school's life from classroom to corridors and in relationships between students and staff.
- Worship, reflection and prayer are clearly central to the life of the school and underpin the ethos and vision of this community of learners.
- Partnerships with the parishes of the deanery are firmly established and ably supported by the work of the chaplain.
- Students spoke eloquently of their school's distinctive Catholic identity and commitment to the Common Good through their fundraising for a range of charities and by raising awareness of the needs of those most in need.
- Students are encouraged to be open to the witness and examples of those from other faiths and none; who form part of the school's distinctive and diverse community viewing the school as a safe place that allows all to flourish and feel valued and secure.
- 100% of students feel the Catholic life of the school is important. This includes young people from other Christian groups as well as those who profess none.
- Students greatly enjoy the opportunity to reflect and pray.
- The parent forum is a great strength of the school as a place to explore and discuss communication between home and school and in the process of building an authentic home school partnership.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection Cardinal Pole Catholic School has undergone a number of significant changes both as an institution with the move into its new buildings and among its leadership and teaching staff. The appointment of a full time lay chaplain and the restructuring of the religious education (RE) department along with whole school focus on supporting relationships with home and school, have actively encouraged greater student and parent involvement in learning which is supported through regular assessment opportunities and communication with home. School leaders take seriously the call to human flourishing and have encouraged staff to explore further academic study. This visionary approach to professional development has resulted with three members of the team successfully completing an MA in Catholic School Leadership, other staff are mid-way through their MA programmes, another member has successfully completed an MA in Christian Theology and a number of staff are involved in completing the CCRS. Two members of the leadership team have also completed their diocesan inspector training with the diocese. This creative approach to ongoing personal development has seen great rewards in the relationships between staff and students and in the creative approach to discipline and behaviour management.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom education meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The programs of study provide a systematic study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold and the relationship between faith and life. The curriculum is creative, dynamic and engaging and resourced very well, including visits and the use of local parish priests to enhance learning opportunities. It meets the learning needs of all groups of students. Topics are revisited to facilitate a deeper understanding. Participation in deanery and diocesan moderation is excellent and the subject leader has been involved in the development of the baseline assessment for year seven students, which is used across the diocese. The school is currently adapting schemes of work to include recent changes to the Key Stage 4 syllabus and to ensure it is progressive and cohesive within each key stage.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

The headteacher and the members of the leadership team all share a coherent vision for Catholic education and they work together to encourage and foster this high expectation across the whole school community. Religious education is central to the life of the school and permeates every facet of life for student and staff. All student groups make outstanding progress across all key stages. This is particularly evident at Key Stage 3 where students who begin with low prior attainment and as a result of a carefully planned provision and a robust assessment model, they make rapid and sustained progress, evidenced by the increasing trend of students attaining the highest levels of achievement. At Key Stage 4 the impact of a creative approach to grouping has ensured that all learners are challenged and supported in a way most appropriate to their needs and to maximise attainment. Key Stage 5 attainment and outcomes are a particular strength of the department with sixth form provision rated in the top ten percent of schools nationally. Attainment in religious education is consistently better than in other core subjects. Monitoring, assessment and analysis of student progress is rigorous and consistent leading to targeted and effective interventions. As a result of a relentless focus on developing students' religious vocabulary, they speak and write with confidence and demonstrate age appropriate understanding. Students are regularly encouraged to reflect on feedback given to them as to how best to improve their work and the department has led whole school on successfully embedding the 'green pen' student response and individual target setting. The subject leader has rightly identified continued focus on strategies to improve Key Stage 4 outcomes as a key priority for the department.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching is outstanding at all key stages and never less than good. Teachers know their students very well and use a variety of creative and engaging teaching strategies, matched to the needs of learners. The best lessons were characterised by pace, a variety of tasks which enabled higher order thinking and teacher questioning to stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teacher subject knowledge is excellent and is imparted with authority and enthusiasm. Students are consistently encouraged across all key stages to evaluate and reflect on the deeper significance of religious belief and practice. Marking and feedback is regular and diagnostic with students noting "the teachers give all students, even the very youngest, the opportunity to build confidence through presentations. This prepares us for the future – for university or for a job".

The leadership and management of religious education are outstanding

The subject leader has a strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the Church. The subject leader works tirelessly to ensure the religious education curriculum meets the needs of learners. Teaching and learning is monitored in a systematic way to ensure student experience in the classroom is outstanding and never less than good. Subject knowledge is continually developed through ongoing professional development and staff are exceptionally well supported in this. The subject leader has excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development of her department and departmental self-evaluation reflects this. The subject leader has rightly identified continued focus on strategies to improve Key Stage 4 outcomes as a key priority for the department.

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

- Review GCSE for more able students to provide more challenge in preparation for A level.
- Nurture and sustain the RE team to embed outstanding teaching and learning in all aspects of provision.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the school has recruited a full time lay chaplain. The introduction of the 'Restorative Justice' programme has greatly encouraged students to be aware of their relationships and the school's expectations concerning behaviour and attitudes. The induction programme for all new staff reinforces and explores the school's distinctive Catholic ethos and supports the core values of its community. The school has implemented very strong transition programmes for Year 7 students or students who are new to the country.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is clearly at the heart of the school and influences and enhances the high quality of Catholic education offered as well as experience of Catholic life and worship. Over 10% of curriculum time is allocated to RE at Key Stages 3 and 4 and at Key Stage 5 time is allocated and assessed through NOCN. The department is appropriately accommodated and fully staffed with well qualified, experienced teachers. There is a generous budget in line with other core subjects including extensive professional development opportunities for staff which empowers them for Catholic school leadership. The chapel space that has been created reflects the Christ-centred vision of governors and senior leaders. They offer outstanding support and guidance in developing and reviewing the place of religious education in the school and work tirelessly to ensure that the Catholic ethos penetrates every aspect of school life. Students clearly recognise this and feel secure and cared for by the staff at Cardinal Pole.

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

is outstanding

This is an inclusive and welcoming school, celebrating the richness and diversity of the community throughout the liturgical year; students from other faith traditions experience understanding and respect for their religious traditions and feel fully part of the school community. There is a very clear outline of liturgical and worship opportunities for all year groups, including regular celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and a weekly Mass. The school chapel is well utilised and a real place of prayer and stillness in the middle of Hackney. Students' liturgical formation is planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. The school chaplain works with a student liturgical group. The school established a Holy Door for the Year of Mercy which was opened by the Cardinal when he celebrated Mass in honour of St Josephine Bakhita. The Holy Door and the pilgrimages to Poland for World Youth Day and to Canterbury provided great opportunities for students to share in each other's faith experiences and to reflect upon these in school through special assemblies.

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

are outstanding

The school is a powerful witness of Christ to the local community and beyond and this is reflected in relationships at all levels. There is a wide range of opportunities for students to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents through an extensive extra-curricular programme in which students of all year groups work together in teams which also builds a strong sense of community. There are outstanding systems in place, allow the diverse cultural and faith mix of students to develop a strong sense of respect and value for one another that is central to its way of being. The focus on core values of integrity, compassion, excellence and justice drives the extensive programme of activities undertaken to reflect the school's commitment and contribution to the Common Good. The school works closely with local charities, including Providence Row (a homeless charity), St Joseph's Hospice and Hackney Food Bank; national charitable links include Lepira and the Catholic Children's Society. The students clearly understand the call to justice and service and articulate well the

theology underpinning this. They are actively engaged in supporting those in need and proactive in creative ways and do so with enthusiasm and generosity and this is a particular strength of the school. The students of the sixth form also run an extensive programme of charity fundraising and activities that involve service in the local community ranging from working with primary schools, reading recovery, lunch time duties and prefect duties all of which prepare students for leadership in later life.

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 undoubted success of Cardinal Pole School is underpinned by strong, honest relationships at all levels rooted in a Christo-centric vision. The school demonstrates truly outstanding, creative and vibrant ways of sustaining its key relationships with parents, parishes, other Catholic schools and the diocese. Members of the leadership team visit a number of parishes to promote the school to perspective parents and students and the impact of this is that there is a larger intake of Catholic pupils in the lower year groups. There are strong links with an impressive number of local clergy across twenty-seven parishes and the school chaplain works hard to sustain this through a schedule of regular parish visits and frequent attendance at deanery meetings. Working with feeder primary schools, the school has implemented very strong transition programmes for Year 7 students or students who are new to the country which enables them to settle quickly. The parent forum is a great strength of the school as a place to explore and discuss communication between home and school and is in the process of building an authentic home school partnership. The fruit of this is the appointment a parent liaison officer to work with hard to reach parents. The school has an ambitious vision for this forum and has plans to be a real resource to the whole community within the next three years offering parent classes, child care services and targeted group sessions.

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

is outstanding

Students have a strongly positive experience of Catholic life which is summed up in the recently developed motto "Deus Dirige Nos" translated as, 'God Guide us.' From student conversations, it is clear that this really does reflect their experience at school; they know that their various abilities and talents are God given and they aspire to be more Christ like. The leadership of the school is fully aware that there are many staff and parents who have made a conscious choice to join this distinctive Catholic community, many of whom may not have a deep knowledge of Catholic education or traditions but are open to the spiritual mission of the school. All staff have high expectations and leaders of the school, including governors are focused and ambitious for this. The recent introduction of a 'Catholic Life' working group led by a member of staff is intended to ensure that all departments share the vision and mission and have ownership of it. Governors have well established systems in place for receiving the views of all stakeholders and offer highly effective support and challenge to the senior leadership team in strategic matters. The students' testaments give solid evidence that the school is highly effective in empowering students to reach their full potential. The chair of governors is a regular visitor to the school to celebrate Mass and to meet with staff. All governors are linked to a member of the leadership team and so are ably supported in their role as critical friends.

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

- Support and provide prayer opportunities for students from other traditions and faiths.
- Further develop the role of the liturgical group in devising and implementing prayer opportunities that enable worship to be a real celebration for the whole community.

Information about this school

- The school is a 6 form entry Catholic Secondary school in the locality of Hackney.
- The school serves 24 parishes in the Hackney area.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 37%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 48% and from other faiths is 9%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 41%.
- There are 215 pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 23 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.
- 634 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (69 %).

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| Department for Education Number | 2044714 |
| Unique Reference Number | 100285 |
| Local Authority | London Borough of Hackney |

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11-19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 1066 |
| The appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fr David Evans |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jane Heffernan |
| Telephone number | 020 89855150 |
| Website | www.cardinalpole.co.uk |
| Email address | enquiries@cardinalpole.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | May 2011 |
| Grades from previous inspection: | |
| Classroom religious education | Good |
| The Catholic life of the school | 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 18 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended two assemblies and a number 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.

Rev Antony J Homer

Lead Inspector

Ms Catherine Bryan
Mrs Sharon O'Donovan
Ms Robina Maher
Mrs Angela Podmore

Associate Inspector
Associate Inspector
Associate Inspector
Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

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