

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

2 Oakleigh Rd South, Whetstone, London N20 9JU

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 1 February 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- Both recommendations of the previous inspection have been fully implemented. Greater knowledge on the part of pupils of scripture passages related to topics currently being taught is evident.
- The school delivers an outstanding classroom curriculum in religious education. This curriculum fully accords with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and also is kept appropriate and focused by continual review.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding when evidence of progress is measured against other subjects. Pupils actively engage in their learning and enjoy it. Creativity and deeper questioning by teachers contribute to achievement and progress is outstanding.
- Teaching in all key stages is outstanding. Pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Strong teacher subject knowledge and imaginative questioning enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of religious concepts. Pupils excel through high teacher expectations.
- The leadership of religious education has created a sense of confident achievement in the teachers, leading to a climate where they are willing to try new and experimental approaches to engage and develop pupil interest.
- The combination of the strong leadership of the headteacher coupled with the confident and focused leadership of the religious education coordinator who is also the deputy headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management in the promotion of religious education.
- The governors offer steady and interested support to the progress and development of religious education in the school.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The three recommendations from the previous report are either implemented or well in hand.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team ensures the place of religious education is at the core of the curriculum. The school fully satisfies the requirement of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales that 10% of classroom teaching time is devoted to religious education.
- The evidence of the displays on the corridors and in the classrooms, of the prayer garden and entrance mosaic and of the focus of the school's website fully confirms the centrality of the Catholic culture and religious education in the life of the school.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Rich opportunities for daily collective worship and prayer are provided. Pupils are actively involved in the preparation and planning of pupil led worship,
- The school has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing' and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents, both as individuals and as a part of the school community.
- The school engages at every opportunity to promote and build links with the parents, the parish and with the diocese.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team are relentless in promoting the Catholic ethos and culture of the school. Governors combine very well their roles of providing both challenge and support to leadership team in this area of school life.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were two main recommendations from the previous inspection. The first was to continue to develop high order thinking skills as they relate to religious education and the second was to develop assessment strategies and tracking across Attainment Target 2 (Learning from Religion) in religious education (RE). Both recommendations have been fully implemented. The school has introduced specific elements in staff meetings to ensure that higher order thinking opportunities are noted and prepared for. The school uses 'The Big Question' to ensure AT2 is captured, and the results are kept in the class book to evidence development. Other areas where there has been improvement since the last inspection include the greater knowledge on the part of pupils of scripture passages related to topics currently being taught, and greater confidence among teachers to try out different and inspiring approaches in their classroom teaching.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom religious education has been carefully prepared using materials approved by the diocese. These are supplemented with additional materials, including those from Cafod. In this way the school delivers an outstanding classroom curriculum in religious education. This curriculum fully accords with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) and also is kept appropriate and focused by continual review. It provides a systematic and developmental programme of teaching about God, Jesus Christ, the Church and living it in daily life. The staff are confident about its delivery and show creative initiatives to promote deeper thinking. The pupils are accustomed to facing challenging questions in their religious education classes and enjoy trying to answer them, without fear of being put down if they turn out to be on the wrong track. The pupils are taught about Judaism and Hinduism very well in the course of their study and benefit from the links made with the local synagogue. Staff also contribute to a deeper understanding of Hinduism. Staff are confident in making links between elements of religious education with drama, art, music and IT.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding when evidence of progress is measured against other subjects. Pupils actively engage in their learning and enjoy it. Creativity and deeper questioning by teachers contribute significantly to achievement and progress is outstanding. Electronic data tracking secures pupils progress in an effective way. It provides evidence that as pupils return to topics previously taught they are able to engage at a deeper level. Big questions and challenges to support progress are in place. Pupils excel through high teacher expectations. Differentiation is embedded in classroom planning and different groups make excellent progress. All pupils are confident and enthusiastic learners. The evidence of creativity in classes that supports both achievement and progress is strong; examples include the artful making of a tabernacle, poetry, studying the life of St Brigid and preparing email letters to send to leaders and politicians on topical issues. Pupils were confident in using appropriate religious terms in explaining what they were currently of learning. Their knowledge of related passages from scripture relevant to the topic being taught was very good; in discussion the pupils were often remarkable in providing key scriptural quotes illustrating the point at hand.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching in all key stages is outstanding. Pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Teaching is inspiring and pupils enjoy the stretch offered in religious education lessons. Strong teacher subject knowledge and imaginative questioning enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding

of religious concepts. During the inspection, this was seen when Key Stage 2 pupils were challenged to discuss the difference between an accident and a sin. Creative teaching strategies and use of resources engage pupils and enable them to make links between everyday life and their spiritual life, for example, when Early Years Foundation Stage pupils made telescopes to look for God around them. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary and their attitude to their learning is excellent. They are keen to take on challenges provided through class teacher marking and the follow up suggestions. In their books there were examples of feedback and response regarding the Big Question such as 'Why is Jesus our salvation?' encouraging pupils to reflect on the deeper significance of religious belief. The leadership of RE has created a sense of confident achievement in the teachers, leading to a climate where they are willing to try new and experimental approaches to engaging and developing pupil interest.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is outstanding

The combination of the strong leadership of the headteacher coupled with the confident and focused leadership of the religious education coordinator who is also the deputy headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management in the promotion of religious education. The management of the religious education curriculum, the provision of resources, the planning of professional development are all securely in place. The delivery of high quality religious education is at the centre of the school's curriculum and life. A rigorous programme of monitoring the teaching of religious education ensures that it is of consistent high quality across the school. The structured programming of classroom planning events leads to a successful exchange of materials and the generation of ideas of interesting challenges to put to the pupils. In particular, staff are confident about the theology underpinning the higher level teaching in religious education. The subject leader regularly attends diocesan moderation and professional development study days and is carefully taking note of the moves towards the diocesan 'Standards Document' which is running as a pilot at the moment. The governors offer steady and interested support to the progress and development of religious education in the school informed by the RE link governor and the RE coordinator's regular reports. The parish priest, also a governor, provides further channels of oversight and encouragement.

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

- Prepare for developments in assessment, including the pilot diocesan 'Standards Document' at the appropriate time, looking in particular how the creative teaching tradition of the school in religious education will be maintained.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were three recommendations from the last inspection. The first of these was to continue to provide pupils with additional opportunities to plan and prepare liturgies and pupils now plan and deliver their own class worship sessions. The pupils respond in the light of 'Laudato Si' to hearing about and considering the needs of others in other parts of the world on a regular basis, which addresses the second recommendation. The final recommendation was to continue to work to achieve 'Fair Trade' status. This continues but aspects of the status are not in the school's control.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team ensures the place of religious education is at the core of the curriculum. The school fully satisfies the requirement of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales that 10% of classroom teaching time is devoted to religious education. Through its choice of teaching programme and the selected additional teaching materials, the school fully conforms to the requirements of the RECD as laid out by the Bishops' Conference. The budget devoted to religious education is in line with that of the other core subjects. The evidence of the displays on the corridors and in the classrooms, of the prayer garden and entrance mosaic and of the focus of the school's website fully confirms the centrality of the Catholic culture and religious education in the life of the school. Each classroom has both a prayer corner and a display capturing the main points of the current topic in religious education. The governors are keenly interested in how religious education and the Catholic life of the school are promoted.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Rich opportunities for daily collective worship and prayer are provided. The liturgy team has enabled pupils to become ever more involved in the prayer of the school, for example leading the praying of the rosary. Pupils are actively involved in the preparation and planning of pupil-led worship, Masses, and sacramental celebrations. The sacramental life of the pupils is enhanced through strong and regular partnership with the local parish, and the parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from the opportunity to attend the parish Mass during the autumn term. They have the Sacrament of Reconciliation and walk the Stations of the Cross in the spring term, and have the opportunity of Adoration in the summer term. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered not only through lively and mature class discussion but also through moments for quiet reflection provided in areas such as the 'praying corner', the space around the statue of the Sacred Heart inside the school and also by the prayer garden and the statue of Our Lady outside. The school is outstanding in its sensitivity and review of its initiatives to develop the spiritual development of the pupils.

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

is outstanding

The school has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing' and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents, both as individuals and as a part of the school community. Within the school, systems are well established that illustrate that the respect due to and value of each individual are central to its way of being. These structures include the school council, assemblies, acts of worship in class, the liturgy group, mentors and pupil

voice in class. The pupils are encouraged to share with others; this sharing illustrates their understanding of the call to serve. They collect funds for various charities, including Caritas, the Passage, and the local hospice. The pupils understand this fundraising is a response to the teaching of Jesus to care for the poor and hungry. The Church's call to action for justice and peace is fully appreciated and understood as is appropriate for the pupils concerned, for instance, Year 6 Holocaust discussion, and global warming for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Common Good is expressed in the School Mission Statement 'Living Together in God's love' and in religious education displays around the school. Pupils debate and discuss issues related to Catholic social teaching across the whole curriculum at age appropriate levels.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is outstanding

The school engages at every opportunity to promote and build links with the parents, the parish and with the diocese. Parents are welcome at assemblies and other liturgical events. They speak highly of what their children tell them of their experiences of prayer and religious education in school. The school links closely with its local parish and the parish priest is a regular visitor to the school as well as serving as a governor. The school maintains good links with its founders, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and have named their new Foundation Stage building after their foundress. Through both deanery and area meetings of the Catholic school leaders, the school has built up good links with its local schools and endeavours to provide good information and encouragement to parents to continue in Catholic education at secondary level. The school cooperates closely with the Westminster Diocese Education Service and participates regularly in the study days and conferences that it organises. The headteacher is a Lead Inspector in the diocesan inspection team while the religious education coordinator is working with other schools in the deanery to produce a booklet of examples to support the new assessment arrangements.

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

is outstanding

The leadership and management of the school are outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher and the senior leadership team are relentless in promoting the Catholic ethos and culture of the school. The pupils are encouraged to treat each other with love and respect, following the teaching of Jesus Christ. The way pupils are taught to relate to each other and the world reflects Catholic social teaching. The school has made new initiatives to engage pupils in the life and prayer of the church, including the Rosary and Adoration. Two members of staff are currently completing the 'Certificate in Catholic Religious Education'. The governors are fully aware that the Catholic life of the school is one of their key areas of responsibility and look to giving it all the support they can. The governors combine very well their roles of providing both challenge and support to the headteacher and senior leadership team. New staff are carefully inducted into understanding Catholic educational priorities and philosophy.

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

- The school should revisit with the pupils the lives and teaching of the house saints to ensure that they understand what is inspirational about their house saint.

Information about our school

- The school is a two-form entry Catholic Primary school in the locality of Whetstone.
- The school serves the parish of St Mary Magdalen, Whetstone.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 97%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 1.4% and from other faiths is 0.7%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 80%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 7.
- There are 8.9% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 7 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is above average.
- There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 36 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (10.9%).

Department for Education Number	302/3510
Unique Reference Number	101338
Local Authority	Barnet

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	411
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Geraldine Smallbone
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine McMahon
Telephone number	020 8445 3854
Website	www.sacredheartprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@sacredheart.barnetmail.net
Date of previous inspection	March 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Very Good
The Catholic life of the school	Outstanding

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 14 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, parents, parish priest, 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.

Deacon Anthony Clark

Mr Daniel Keane

Mr James Stacey

Lead Inspector

Associate Inspector

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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