

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report



Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

Basuto Road, London SW6 4BL

Date of inspection: 2nd June 2015

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy is good. This is because the leadership team and subject coordinator have put systems in place which are delivering a good quality curriculum, resulting in a high level of religious literacy and understanding for all groups in the school and a high level of confidence among staff. Religious education is at the heart of the curriculum and is well funded through resources, time and staffing. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in religious education lessons, both in their knowledge of the Catholic faith and in their capacity to talk about what it means to them. Teachers' subject knowledge is of a high standard which is reflected in the improving pupil progress and attainment, and teaching is consistently good with elements of outstanding. Senior leaders are excellent role models for all staff; there is effective monitoring and impressive provision for new teachers. The governing body provides a balance of challenge and support and is active in the academic life of the school.

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 1

The school's overall effectiveness in this area is outstanding. The commitment of the executive headteacher, the associate headteacher, the leadership team and the governing body to its Catholic identity is evident in all aspects of their work. The Catholic faith is at the centre of the whole school and strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' experiences of the teachings and traditions of the Church. Prayer and worship are central to all that the school does and the commitment to social justice and the Common Good is well understood by pupils. The school encourages respect for all members of the community and values each individual. Relationships and behaviour are excellent within the school and pupils enjoy the many opportunities available to serve the school and wider community. Parents are positive about the school and express appreciation of the way their children's faith life is nurtured. There are strong links with the parishes where most Catholic pupils live.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteachers, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent 1 day in school, visited 9 lessons and 1 assembly, and carried out 5 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 Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Parsons Green 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
Ms Catherine Bryan
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Lead Inspector
Associate Inspector
Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a two form entry in the LA of Hammersmith and Fulham and the locality of Parsons Green. The school serves the parishes of Holy Cross, Parsons Green and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Sands End. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 92%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 5% and from other Faiths or no faith 3%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 67%.

There are 319 pupils on roll, with 7 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHC). 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. Sixty six pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	205/354
URN Number:	100345

Executive Headteacher:	Mrs Kathleen Williams
Headteacher:	Mrs Catherine Kearney
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Seana Bengtsson
Date of previous inspection:	7 November 2008
Previous Inspection grade:	1

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</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?

The previous inspection report recommended two areas for improvement:-

- Differentiate for higher and lower achievers in planning and delivery of lessons
- Extend the good assessment practice of years 3,5 and 6 with the revised levels of attainment to all classes

The school has implemented both these recommendations, up to a point, although the work in both areas is still ongoing. In 2008, differentiation was largely by outcome and now teachers are clearly planning their lessons with the differing needs of their pupils in mind. However, this should be developed further in order to sustain the current improvement in progress and attainment. Assessment processes are now more effective across the school as a result of the benefits of moderation and collaborative planning. The school recognises, however, that it needs to support teachers in improving the accuracy of assessment.

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

Grade 2

The religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and the mapping of the core content of 'Come and See' to the Curriculum Directory is good. Holy Cross School has recently adopted this programme and have ensured that the four areas of study are identified in the schemes of work, at a level appropriate for each age group. The school's resources have been audited in light of this change and have now been supplemented from a variety of other sources, leading to a structured, well thought out curriculum which will ensure that the pupils progress effectively through the key stages. Both Islam and Judaism have been studied this year. The curriculum reflects a variety of learning styles, thus creating opportunities for pupils to succeed. Staff training has been focussed on this new religious education curriculum to ensure that teachers were secure in their understanding of the programme. The parish priest also made himself available to assist teachers in their knowledge and understanding of the religious education topics in the Directory. In every lesson inspectors saw reference to scripture and use of the Bible; pupils were comfortable with reading and listening to scripture and demonstrated a good understanding of the language which supported their learning.

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

Grade 2

Pupils have a good level of achievement. Moderation takes place at school, and deanery and diocesan levels to ensure accuracy. Attainment is good and current data indicates that this should be sustained or improved. Internal tracking predicts that almost all pupils will make expected progress over both key stages; this will improve as the newly introduced programme and more effective assessment opportunities are embed and become established. There is evidence in books of pupil achievement and good progress in religious education. This current level of achievement is made possible because of the high expectations of the leadership team and the rigour with which teaching,

assessment and planning are now monitored. Teachers encourage pupils to use the correct religious language and vocabulary and have good subject knowledge themselves.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

Teaching is overall good and with some evidence of outstanding. Children get off to a good start in Early Years Foundation Stage, where teaching is calm, nurturing and purposeful, and this is built on as pupils' progress through the school. Planning of lessons is very thorough and teachers appear confident in teaching the subject. They have secure subject knowledge of scripture with good use of Bible extracts in all classes. Staff have high expectations and pupils make good progress which is evidenced in their books. Teachers new to the profession are being very well supported by the religious education co-ordinator and the leadership team, who model lessons for them. This is very effective in developing the teachers' skills quickly. Tasks are often differentiated to enable good progress to take place; however, in some cases these did not allow pupils to demonstrate achievement at the higher levels of attainment. Questioning was a particular strength, bringing out higher order thinking which deepened pupils' understanding, so developing their religious literacy. For instance, a Year 6 class discussion about healing and reconciliation was lively and elicited some inspiring responses to thoughtful questions. Teachers give good, developmental feedback to pupils both orally and in their marking; however there is scope for this to be improved and more explicit 'Next Steps' comments will enable the pupils to make even more rapid progress. In all lessons observed, there was a calm, positive climate and the response and engagement of the pupils is strength; behaviour in lessons was always of a high standard. Support staff are very well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership team have a strong commitment to promoting high quality religious education and their support is valued and evident. The religious education coordinator shares this vision and is very effective in leading the staff to improve; attainment is rising quickly in religious education. Teaching is observed, books are subject to regular scrutiny and planning is collaborative which ensures good support is given where needed; there is a sense of common purpose. Departmental monitoring is regular but needs to be embedded further so that the improvement in pupils' achievement will continue. Carefully planned continuous professional development is ensuring that all staff are fully able to support pupils in religious education lessons. The school leadership is fully committed to enabling staff to obtain the CCRS qualification and supports them in this process. Governors are committed to the school and know it well. They support the strategies currently in place to ensure high standards in religious education.

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

- Develop greater consistency in 'Next Step' marking across the school, so that all pupils have a deeper understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- To support teachers in developing more effective and accurate assessment, using the agreed levels of understanding.
- To improve further teachers skills in differentiation and challenge for all pupils.

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 were no recommendations for the Catholic life of the school in the last report.

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

Grade 1

Religious education receives 10% of curriculum time across all key stages every week. This is planned for and monitored by the leadership team. It is obvious that the school views religious education as the heart of the curriculum and as such, time, money and resources are given in accordance with its key status. Religious education has a generous budget, one which exceeds other core subjects. All classrooms provide a vibrant learning environment and there are displays and prayer corners throughout the school which are generally of a good quality. Many of the religious education displays take the opportunity to showcase children's own work. The school devotes much of its in-service on religious education and the Catholic life of the school which particularly supports the staff who are new to teaching. The leadership team are also committed to ensuring that appropriate staff attend the various training opportunities for development in religious education and Catholic life provided by the diocese. The additional support of the parish priest is encouraged and accommodated. Governors are fully aware of their duty to support and promote the Catholic life and religious education offered in the school and do so with enthusiasm.

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

Grade 1

The provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is outstanding. Prayer is central to the daily life of the school. Pupils are confident in planning, preparing and leading class acts of worship and are given the opportunity to do so from EYFS onwards. This child led worship is most impressive and it is inspiring to see how the pupils respond to the opportunity to build their faith and their desire to share it with others. The acts of worship for the whole school always follow the same pattern - gather, word, mission, response - which strengthens the pupils' confidence when planning class worship. During class worship and assemblies pupils are reverent, respectful and able to join in the traditional prayers of the Church. The liturgical year is central to worship in the school and a programme of eucharistic and non-eucharistic celebrations are planned and prepared by the leadership team and the parish priest; this offers vibrant, engaging and collaborative worship opportunities throughout the school year. Each classroom has an attractive prayer focus which reflects the liturgical year. The importance placed upon Catholic traditions of prayer, worship and liturgies results in pupils being involved, engaged and aware of their own spirituality. The quality and opportunities for prayer and worship are reviewed and evaluated regularly and action taken on areas for development. The Wednesday Word is sent home with pupils so strengthening the home, school and parish cooperation.

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

Grade I

The school community demonstrates an outstanding commitment to service and the Common Good. There is enthusiastic support for the Trussel Trust Food banks, the Catholic Children's Society, Operation Christmas Child and CAFOD. These charity initiatives, the annual international day and the religious education curriculum all make a contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of social justice issues which will develop further with time. Conversations with pupils indicate that they have an excellent understanding that supporting charities show Christian witness in following Jesus' example and older pupils show a fuller understanding of the theology underpinning the Church's mission; they appreciate that their own contribution can make a difference. Assemblies, focus weeks and work in class all contribute to pupils' understanding of local and global issues. Pupils spoken to were very positive about the school and said they were all encouraged to respect each other and always do their best; a wide variety of achievements are rewarded at the weekly celebration assemblies. Pupils are aware of the moral and social issues within our society and are keen to share their views, listen to others and reflect on the impact of their actions and those of others. The school works hard to ensure there is a common sense of belonging. All pupils are enabled to develop their talents, and are given roles with age appropriate levels of responsibility.

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 the staff to the school's mission as a Catholic school within the Diocese of Westminster. The relationship with the Servite Catholic Primary School, under the leadership of the Executive head, is strong at all levels and has been instrumental in Holy Cross's recent rapid development. Parents are supportive of the changes and are active through a parent council as well as through a thriving PTA. The school is actively involved in meetings with other Catholic schools in the local area and in the Diocese, contributing to the joint moderation of religious education assessment. The school has a good relationship with its diocesan advisor and both governors and members of staff regularly attend diocesan training meetings and conferences. The school is committed and effective in encouraging cooperation between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the diocese. The home, school, parish partnership is an outstanding feature of the school and the parish priest is always a welcome visitor to the school. Partnership at all levels is outstanding and governors are committed to promoting these partnerships at all levels and take an active role by their presence and support.

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

Grade 1

The leadership of Holy Cross has a clear vision of the Catholic educational mission. Governors understand their strategic role and the challenges facing the school; they are fully involved and are proactive in their support. The Executive Headteacher is inspirational and the whole leadership team is committed to the formation of the whole person and to raising standards. This is shared across the school so that all staff have a focused understanding that every pupil is a unique and valued individual and that their education and progress are of paramount importance. The leadership team is cohesive and has a collective and dynamic vision for the school; they have been strongly focused on continued development and improvement in all aspects of the work of the school. All the staff promote high quality pastoral care and effective discipline; they encourage an aspirational ethos and a strong feeling of respect for others and for their environment. The pupils value the caring attitude of the staff, who support them with their difficulties and challenges. There is continuous striving to improve further. Pupils feel safe at Holy Cross and enjoy their learning – so they flourish. Resources are well deployed and the learning environment is stimulating, despite the state of some of the buildings. Relationships with the parishes are exemplary and parents are supportive and are welcomed into the school.

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

- To deepen the pupils' understanding of Catholic social teaching, particularly their understanding of justice and peace issues.