

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

1 Pierrepont Road, Acton, London W3 9JR

25<sup>th</sup> March 2015



### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy is outstanding. This is because the dynamic leadership of the headteacher has ensured that religious education is at the heart of the curriculum and is very well funded through resources, time and staffing. The team approach to subject leadership has led to a wide range of expertise being available for planning and support. The regular cycle of moderation, class observations, scrutiny of work and progress through the levels of attainment indicate outstanding effectiveness across all phases. Senior leaders are excellent role models for all staff and very good support of new teachers has led to outstanding pupil progress. Leaders at all levels have ensured that the outstanding structure and presentation of the curriculum captures the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent which has led to confident delivery and engaging lessons. By Year 6 pupils' religious literacy is of a very high standard and they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. The well informed governing body provides a good balance of challenge and support and is active in the 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 I**

The school's overall effectiveness in this area is outstanding. The leadership of the head and governors has ensured that commitment to its Catholic identity is evident in all aspects of the work of the school. Catholic faith is at the centre of the whole school curriculum overview and strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' experiences of sacramental celebrations. The fullness of the Catholic faith and way of life is presented through the teachings and traditions of the Church in a way which engages and inspires pupils. 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. Relationships and behaviour are excellent within the school and pupils take advantage of the many opportunities available to serve the school and wider community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and express great appreciation of the way their children's faith life is nurtured.

## 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 one day in school, visited fourteen lessons, four acts of collective worship and carried out seven 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 Vincent's Catholic Primary School Acton 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 Pamela Brannigan	Lead Inspector
Mrs Liz Doonan	Associate Inspector
Father Antony Homer	Associate Inspector

## Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is two form entry with a bulge class in Year 3 in the LA of Ealing and the locality of Acton. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Acton and St Aidan's East Acton. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 97%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 3%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 61%.

There are 493 pupils on roll, with five 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 an average rate of families claiming free school meals. One hundred and fourteen pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	307-3509
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Headteacher:	Mrs Tina Cleugh
Chair of Governors:	Mr Sean Currie

Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2009
Previous Inspection grades:	Grade 1

<b>Key for inspection grades:</b>	<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 school has fully met all the areas highlighted from the inspection in 2009. This has led to increased effectiveness of leadership and management of religious education through the establishment of a team of colleagues representing all key phases and levels of experience, including members who have previously been subject leaders. In addition clear monitoring systems have been established within termly cycles which include opportunities for middle leaders to observe, coach and model effective delivery of religious education.

The introduction of the Composite Model has greatly increased the level of pupils' religious literacy and understanding of theology. This is impressive. Generous investment in high quality resources and more effective use of teaching assistants has led to excellent lessons where all groups of pupils make rapid progress.

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

#### **Grade 1**

By following the Composite Model the school is providing a systematic study of the areas in the Curriculum Directory. This is expanded through the school's own 'Catholic Curriculum' which links other subject areas to Catholic life. This is now being embedded and evaluated by the headteacher each term. These planned links are leading to a wide range of rich and varied activities which encourage enthusiasm and a thirst for knowledge among pupils. In planning, the school maps out how the various topics covered match the Curriculum Directory. Religious education is presented in a variety of imaginative ways and pupils are well aware of how their new learning is based on what has gone before and they are able to make links. Resources, for example class sets of Bibles are very well used to make sure all opportunities for learning are met. The recent introduction of 'Caritas in Action' is developing increased levels of knowledge and understanding of the Common Good and social justice. Through high expectations there is a clear and shared vision of the importance of promoting religious literacy among pupils. New staff are provided with a high level of support throughout each section of the programme to make sure that they are secure in all aspects.

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

#### **Grade 1**

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. There is evidence of rapid progress measured by internal and external monitoring and moderation which shows that pupils attain at least the same levels as in other core subjects. Internal tracking shows large numbers of pupils make more than expected progress over all key stages. Moderation takes place frequently at school, as well as involvement at deanery and diocesan levels to ensure accuracy. Data shows that achievement is exceptional for all groups including those with significant additional needs, with some pupils making rapid and accelerated progress across all the phases. In class, pupils' responses and work demonstrate excellent subject knowledge including being able to make links between Old and New Testaments, scripture and church practices as well as being able to put events into their historical contexts and relating learning to their own lives. Current data shows that this excellent attainment and progress is likely to be sustained.

This outstanding achievement is made possible because the headteacher has put in place a carefully planned programme of continuous professional development over recent years which has led to a culture of high expectations from all the staff. This is demonstrated in the tasks set within each lesson and the excellent questioning which encourages all pupils to express their answers using the correct religious language and vocabulary. A full time learning mentor is available to help pupils who need additional support. Teaching staff model a high level of religious literacy themselves and pupils show real enthusiasm to join in with this. Pupils' interest and enjoyment of religious education was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 1**

Overall the quality of teaching is judged to be outstanding. Teaching seen across the school and evidenced in workbooks and the school's own moderation is never less than good with many examples of outstanding practice. In Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 practical activities and well scaffolded tasks keep children highly motivated and engaged. Parallel lessons in Polish were also in place for pupils who are just beginning to acquire English vocabulary. Throughout the school it is clear that staff expectations are very high and pupils are keen to participate and respond. Teachers and support staff demonstrate outstanding subject knowledge and the impact on pupils' progress is evident in their books and the lessons observed. Planning is systematic and detailed to take account of pupils' earlier learning. The use of 'next steps' marking is consistent across the school and work is carefully differentiated to allow pupils to make rapid progress in all phases. Regular assessments at the end of topics allow teachers to keep a careful track on progress. Support staff are very well deployed and make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. Pupils are able to make impressive links with previous learning and in a Year 2 lesson were able to link the Last Supper with the first Passover and then with the Eucharist.

Outstanding teaching in religious education results in pupils who enjoy their lessons and are able to discuss their targets and next steps in learning with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils are fully engaged during lessons and their behaviour is excellent. Appropriate homework is set in all year groups regularly and encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade 1**

The leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. This is due to the dynamic and effective leadership of the headteacher and her relentless commitment to excellence in all areas of religious education. She has inspired her team with a creative vision for the pupils which has led to a strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the Church. The establishment of the religious education team has widened the scope for more active involvement in modelling and coaching as well as the sharing of expertise across the phases. The deputy headteacher oversees the half termly schedule of monitoring which includes record keeping, work scrutiny, teaching and questioning for higher level responses as well as the evaluation of planning to inform future teaching needs. Carefully planned in-service, teachers' outstanding subject knowledge and on-going assessment techniques ensure there is an excellent level of challenge for the more able pupils. There is well thought out continuous professional development for teachers and other adults included in the learning process. This ensures 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 support them in this process. The detailed school improvement plan clearly identifies issues for action and evaluates current provision for religious education.

Governors are fully committed to the school and know it well. The experienced chair of governors meets the headteacher twice a week for a review of current provision and at present, a progress report on the new buildings. Governors employ an external consultant to review the effectiveness of their role and their evaluation of religious education and the Catholic life of the school. They are aware of the need for succession planning in Catholic education and this is evident in their support for curriculum teams and increased responsibilities available to staff.

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

- Continue to implement the action plan for religious education and ensure consistency is sustained across the school.

## **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 key areas for development in this area identified in the last inspection other than to continue to monitor the effectiveness of collective worship and religious education. This is ongoing and part of the regular monitoring cycle which has been in place for some time. In recent years the school has made a number of improvements in its provision of Catholic Life. School prayer books have been compiled for use in appropriate age groups. 'Prayer Bears' and 'Mary Bags' support family prayer for younger pupils as well as the 'Wednesday Word' for Key Stage 2. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to plan and lead class worship, weekly class masses and seasonal devotions, leading to a sense of ownership. The mission statement is under constant review and linked to the six House saints.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The school fully recognises religious education as a core subject which is given the highest priority. This is reflected in the generous staffing and budget devoted to religious education and the excellent quality of resources available to staff. Across the school at least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education which is planned, tracked and monitored with rigour. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are very well supported by half termly meetings linked to the aspect of the Curriculum Directory being taught. This is in addition to the school's regular continuous professional development programme and excellent support for new staff. The parish priest from St Aidan's considers the school's effectiveness as part of the education mission of the church as outstanding. The school is currently embedding its 'Catholic Curriculum' links across all aspects of planning and delivery across the phases. This is guiding staff to recognise the significance of the Catholic faith and practice and to inform and affirm daily lives and relationships.

### **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. Headteacher, staff and pupils are creative in their planning and delivery of high quality acts of worship and the celebration of Mass. The establishment of 'religious education recruits' within the school has fashioned a resource that greatly enhances the spirituality and formation of pupils through the careful application of Lectio Divina and Examen. This group, and their developing skills with Lectio, is a resource to be widely celebrated within the parish community. All pupils are given opportunities to pray at regular times in the school day and each classroom has an attractive prayer focus and display board which reflects the liturgical year. Pupils are taught to pray in different ways and are given opportunities to write their own prayers, many examples of which were seen during the inspection. During class worship and assemblies pupils are reverent, respectful and able to join in the traditional prayers of the Church. Masses, liturgies and celebrations are carefully planned to enable pupils to actively prepare and lead worship. Pupils participate in and support parish life by attending mass each week on a rota basis. The importance placed upon the celebrations of the liturgical year and Catholic traditions of prayer and worship 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 commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice**

### **Grade I**

The commitment and contribution of the school community to the Common Good is a real strength of the school. There has been a great emphasis across year groups to encourage and empower pupils to know and understand their responsibilities to social justice both globally and in their local community. Examples include an annual 'homeless day' when year 6 pupils 'live' in cardboard boxes for the day and are sponsored to raise funds for a local centre for homeless people. This was followed by Year 3 making a film where pupils interviewed members and helpers at the centre about the impact of the school's fundraising on their situation. There are global links with 'Mission Together' to support a project to help orphans in Lusaka. Speakers helped pupils to recognise the plight of these children and the difference the school could make in their future. Pupils spoke eloquently of the theological ideas underpinning their understanding of the Common Good and social justice. They recognise that their small actions can have a great effect for good within the world. A very wide range of charities are supported throughout the year and conversations with pupils indicate that supporting these organisations allows them to see gospel values put into practice. The school recognises the needs of its own community and covers themes of inequality, injustice and prejudice throughout the year. These are explored through Remembrance Day, Black History, Fairtrade, Anti-Bullying and eSafety. Assemblies, focus weeks and work in class all contribute to pupils' understanding of local and global issues. Families are supported by the provision of a Breakfast Club as well as a huge range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils clearly feel safe in school and said they felt valued by staff whom they described as wanting them to be content. They said they were all encouraged to respect each other and always do their best. They described the school as a community where everyone is valued. Pupils are given opportunities to show service and leadership through a range of responsible roles including as prefects, monitors and members of the school council.

## **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**

The school makes every effort to maintain a strong partnership with parents and carers and works closely with them to develop a shared understanding of the mission of the school. Questionnaires and 'Parent Mail' indicate that parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school and appreciate the high standard of education and the support for prayer, worship and Catholic Life. They are also given opportunities to express their views on their children's education and the school takes these into account in its response. The school welcomes a number of parents and parishioners as volunteer helpers in Early years Foundation Stage. Parish links are also good with pupils attending weekly mass at Our Lady of Lourdes on a rota basis. Current building works mean that the church is used for assemblies and other whole school celebrations. The parish newsletters regularly include school events which enable parishioners to see it as a vital part of the community. The parish priest of St Aidan's who is also the link governor for religious education and Catholic life is a frequent visitor to the school. He acts as a valuable learning resource as well as meeting the headteacher and religious education team to plan masses and liturgies. He reports back to the governing body which also invites groups of pupils to its meetings to comment on a range of subjects. There are excellent links with the diocese which is demonstrated through participation in training for both staff and governors. The headteacher is generous with her support for the diocesan inspection process. She is involved in mentoring and coaching potential inspectors and helping to evaluate and review the

inspection process. She and her deputy attend diocesan conferences and have a leadership role in deanery moderation meetings. The school is also involved with the West London Teaching Schools Alliance as well as St Mary's University.

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

#### **Grade I**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in developing and promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding in the way in which Catholicity pervades all areas of school life. The governing body works closely with the headteacher to ensure their clear vision of Catholic education and life is shared by the whole school community. Members of the governing body fully understand their roles and responsibilities and are well placed to be both supporting and challenging. They do this by keeping abreast of initiatives in religious education, regular meetings with curriculum teams and support from the diocese through governor training. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models who lead by example. They ensure that all staff participate fully in the religious life of the school which includes staff and class masses, religious assemblies, religious events and class visits. Extensive building works and the absence of a school hall have not diminished provision for prayer and worship in the slightest, with staff going to great lengths to ensure the Catholic life is as vibrant and engaging as ever. The mission statement 'To grow, learn and achieve by following Christ' underlines all of school life and is well known by the whole community.

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

- Consider extending the role of the religious education recruits in developing Lectio Divina as a resource for the parish community.