

St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School

Hunters Hill, South Ruislip HA4 9HS



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 27 June 2018

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The headteacher and her religious education leaders provide very effective leadership of the subject.
- The governing body is well informed and provides good strategic direction.
- The religious education curriculum is well planned.
- Creativity in religious education is also developing well through the use of art and ICT.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and all around the school is of a high standard.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate.
- Standards of achievement and progress are at least good across the school. Attainment is high at the end of both key stages.
- Pupils learn about a wide range of other faiths.
- Teaching is good in all classes.
- Children get an outstanding start in the Nursery and rapidly acquire a high standard of religious literacy for their age.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are being well supported and make strong progress.
- Religious education leaders ensure that staff are well supported.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The achievement and progress in religious education need to improve further to match the outcomes in other core subjects for the most able pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in writing about religious education.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher and her leadership team in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- The school environment clearly shows upon entry that this is indeed a Catholic community. Displays all around the school and prayer areas in Nursery and in gardens show the importance of Catholic life.
- 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education in every year group, so meeting the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are judged outstanding. There are extensive opportunities within the school for daily collective worship and prayer.
- The celebration of the Eucharist is carefully planned both in school and in the local parish church. Many other sacramental celebrations are offered at times throughout the liturgical year.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is carefully fostered in this school.
- The school genuinely understands the call to be of service. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents both in school and in the wider world. Parents are very supportive of the Catholic life of the school as evidenced by a questionnaire sent out during this inspection.
- The governing body is very well informed and makes a major contribution to the work and Catholic life of the school. Governors are rigorous in their strategic leadership, through their visits and via challenge and support they provide to the leadership team.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has developed its own interesting and detailed assessment and tracking systems to monitor standards in religious education (RE). The school's new marking policy is being complied with in all classes and pupils are now responding to their teacher's comments on how to improve their work. Performance management targets for leaders are being linked to developing classroom RE. Home learning in RE is now well developed.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The school has an RE curriculum that fully meets all the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* (RECD). It has been well planned and mapped by the RE leader. There is an appropriate emphasis placed on the use of Bibles and direct scripture. The school supplements its core scheme by encouraging creative activities to enhance the teaching of RE. Examples seen included use of iPads to make iMovies, drama and especially artwork. Art plays a key role in the delivery of the RE curriculum. Pupils' religious vocabulary is being very well developed in the Nursery Year. Religious literacy and vocabulary is of a high standard in the early years in this school.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is at least good in all of the key stages. It is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and outstanding in the Nursery. Children enter the Nursery with below average levels of attainment in key areas and leave with attainment and understanding well above national averages therefore progress is deemed to be outstanding. As a result, children enter Reception with standards in core subjects above national expectations. They leave at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 with standards above age expectations therefore progress is judged to be good overall in RE. For those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) progress is consistently strong across the school. Planning is thorough and detailed plans are provided to help teachers in delivering high quality RE lessons. The RE leader plays a key role in this area. In the Nursery, pupils are quickly introduced to a wide and appropriate range of religious language and activities by a highly effective team. Progress is rapid in the Nursery Year. Pupils are able to talk about the life of Jesus and discuss simple parables from an early age. The children were able to relate the story of the Good Samaritan in detail and examples of emergent writing and mark making were on display around the Nursery Year classroom. In Key Stage 1 pupils are developing their creative learning in RE with some high quality art around Pentecost and good writing seen in composing their own Lenten prayers. In Year 2 pupils were learning about Pope Francis and the Holy Spirit. In Key Stage 2, pupils were learning in some depth about other faiths such as Buddhism and Judaism. Presentation in Year 3 was of a very high order as was the written work around Discipleship. Year 4 were learning about the *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading) and produced some lovely booklets about Buddhism. Year 5 had evidence in their RE books of using Lego models to engage boys more in their learning. This is proving highly effective. Pupils also recorded a very challenging debate around the topic of euthanasia. Written work in this area showed pupils to be highly motivated in developing their thinking and oracy skills. Year 6 were working on the Cardinal Virtues and linking these to historical figures. Pupils in Year 6 do get the chance to write at length in RE but this is mainly for assessment purposes. Opportunities to write in different genres and develop higher order writing skills are being missed and this needs to be addressed. Analysis scrutinised during this inspection showed that there is not yet enough challenge in lessons which would raise standards even further by the end of Key Stage 2 and the school recognises this. The quality of work on display in classrooms and around the school was all of a very high quality. Aboriginal art linked to Christianity on display in the corridors was original and worthy of note.

The quality of teaching**is good**

The quality of teaching is at least good in the majority of classes seen. This judgement is based on the typicality of teaching over time. Pupil behaviour is outstanding in all classes observed and is strength of this school. This is true in classrooms and all around the school and also at playtimes and in the lunch hall. Behaviour for learning and during lessons is also outstanding. The inspection took place on a very hot day and despite this most pupils remained on task. Most pupils are enthusiastic learners and are well engaged in lessons. Mutual respect is evident in every class seen between pupil and all adults. Staff know their individual pupils well. Teaching assistants provide good support for those pupils who have special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND). Teaching in the Nursery Year is of a high standard as the children are provided with a rich learning environment both indoors and especially outdoors. All areas of learning have been catered for outdoors with prayer areas and areas for quiet reflection. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and many ask appropriate questions to further learning for all abilities. There is not yet enough development of questioning in the daily life of the school and so not all pupils get a chance to respond. Pupils are being taught debating skills and in Year 5 there was evidence of some challenging teaching when pupils discussed the topic of euthanasia. This was then extended to compare other faiths views on this sensitive topic. ICT is being well used in the school and pupils were seen making an iMovie about St John Southworth. Art is being well taught as evidenced by work in books and all around the school. The teaching about other faiths and traditions such as Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam is well developed in this school. The school has introduced many new initiatives around the teaching of school values, British values and Catholic values. However, these are not always being taught in a coherent and cohesive manner. Homework is in evidence and is being well used by teachers. Older pupils have the chance to do research on figures from history and their virtues. Marking is developing well in the school and is generally being consistently applied across all classes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education**is good**

The leadership and management of RE are good. The headteacher has driven forward many new initiatives since she started. She is being well supported by her senior leaders. The RE subject leader provides good support and guidance to teachers. Her knowledge of the RE curriculum and assessment is good and she is developing her role effectively. RE leaders clearly identify strengths in the quality of teaching. The head sets high expectations of staff and acts swiftly to ensure that quality teaching is being delivered. Monitoring of books and quality of teaching are carefully structured and give RE leaders a good sense of where areas need to improve. There is an open and honest culture of self-evaluation in this school. RE leaders are ambitious for their school to become even better. The governing body is highly supportive of the work of the school and speak with knowledge about their roles and work in the school. They visit the school regularly and are being kept well informed about all developments. Performance management targets for school leaders are carefully chosen to ensure leaders are held to account. Governors spoken with have an accurate understanding of where the school currently is and are ambitious for the future. The leaders' self-evaluation of classroom religious education is thorough, comprehensive and highly accurate in every area. School leaders are realistic and know their school very well indeed.

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

- Raise even further the standards of pupil achievement and progress at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practice their extended writing skills in RE in upper Key Stage 2 classes.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no areas for development in the previous inspection. However, since the last inspection, the school has established a Mini-Vinnies team who support the school and parish community in helping those less fortunate. The head has introduced greater opportunities for pupils to be of service to others within the school.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE in every year group. An appropriate budget is allocated to the subject every year and the school is well resourced. The building is maintained to a high standard both indoors and outdoors. The Nursery outside area is highly developed to help younger children in their RE learning journey. Relationships are good at all levels between adults, parents and pupils and are based on mutual respect. The school is strongly committed to the teaching of Catholic religious education and its Catholic life. The school is also committed to the teaching about other faiths to prepare its pupils for the wider world. The governing body ensures that RE is at the core of the curriculum and the RE link governor is highly effective. Training opportunities are plentiful and are well planned for. This includes members of the governing body who visit the school regularly.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are central to the Catholic life of the school and the community it serves. Prayers are carefully planned across all age groups and are said from the moment children enter the school. Children in the Nursery know how to make the Sign of the Cross and hold their hands in reverence. The parish priest supports the prayer life of the school through weekly visits. Links are made to reflect the liturgical year and assemblies are also co-ordinated to reflect the liturgical calendar. Pupils observed were respectful and keen to participate in prayer and collective worship. Prayer and worship are well monitored and pupils' input is welcomed. A range of resources, such as Prayer Bags have been purchased to aid and enhance pupils and their families experience of worship. Mass is celebrated regularly throughout the year and there are termly class Masses in the local parish church. Prayer and worship were used in a sensitive manner last year when a pupil died in sad circumstances. This greatly helped the pupils and community in dealing with the loss. A distinctive feature of this school is the care given to review and reflect on acts of worship to ensure that they are age appropriate. This is highly effective.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

is outstanding

The school is outstanding in its work to promote the Common Good. The Gospel call to help and support those who are less fortunate is being effectively promoted throughout the school. This is evidenced through the curriculum, assemblies, acts of worship and through the many actions and example of everyone in the school community. This is also evident in work seen in pupil's books. A random selection of the older pupils were spoken with and asked about their understanding of their own class charities such as Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS). Pupils spoken with were all aware of their own class based charities. However, they were far more reticent when it came to discussing why they do such extensive and good works. They were not able to articulate whose example they were following without considerable prompting. The theology around the

Common Good is not yet embedded within the school. Another interview took place with the Minnie-Vinnies where pupils told inspectors how they were able to: "Make the lives of people better". This group were very proud of the role they played and spoke eagerly of their plans for the future. They also clearly enjoyed their roles. The school has done extensive work to enhance the teaching about the Common Good. Evidence of pupils learning about British Values, the six new School Values and also Gospel Values were all being taught. The school needs to review its work in this area to avoid causing confusion. The school supports a wide range of charities both abroad and in the local area including the Harvest Festival, Catholic Children's Society and overseas Cafod and Save the Children. Pupils are very respectful of others, sensitive to differences and accepting of diversity and other faiths. They are given ample opportunities to serve within their own school community in roles such as head boy and girl, Pupil Voice Committee and in helping younger pupils read. In this school the opportunities to be of service start at a very young age and this is a distinctive feature of the Catholic life of the school.

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

Partnerships at all levels are also outstanding. This is a strong faith community. Parents are very supportive of the school and recognise the improvements made in RE over the last couple of years. Parents feel secure in supporting the school and value its core purpose. They also think that their children receive a very good start in life in the Nursery. Parents are welcomed in to the school for assemblies and liturgies. Links with parents are very good and the questionnaire provided was almost overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its leaders. The parish priest is also a member of the RE link committee and plays a key and integral role in all the school does. The school participates fully in all diocesan activities and regularly attends both deanery and diocesan moderation of pupils work. The school also avails itself of opportunities for professional development provided by the Westminster Education Service and is currently also a Teaching School. Links with other Hillingdon Catholic schools are very strong and co-operation and sharing of good practice occurs on a regular basis.

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

is outstanding

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding. The school motto: 'Where the love of God is always present' is at the heart of all that is done as a Catholic school community. The commitment of the head and her leadership team to promote the Catholic life of the school is evident in every aspect of school life. The governors share the vision of the staff of the school and are supportive and equally committed to continuous improvement. Parents expressed great faith in this school and its Catholic life. Senior leaders at all levels are deeply committed to excellence. Its self-evaluation of Catholic life is also highly accurate in every regard. Therefore the leadership of Catholic life overall is judged to be outstanding.

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

- Develop further the language, spoken word and theology in the teaching about the Common Good.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Hillingdon.
- The school serves the parish of St. Gregory the Great, South Ruislip, with some pupils from St. Thomas More, Eastcote.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 98%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 83%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 6.
- There are 27 (12%) of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities (plus an additional 4 in reception) of whom 1 has a statements of Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is below average
- There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 6 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (3%).

Department for Education Number	312 / 3400
Unique Reference Number	102421
Local Authority	Hillingdon

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	223
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Clive Lawn
Headteacher	Mrs Kristy Davis
Telephone number	01895 808194
Website	www.st-swithunwells.hillingdon.sch.uk
Email address	admin@ssw.school
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2013
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	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 7 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 2 acts of prayer and worship in classes.
- 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 Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

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