



# Westminster Cathedral School

Bessborough Place, London SW1V 3SE

Date of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014

## A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

Classroom religious education is very effective in developing the pupils' religious literacy. Classroom religious education is judged to be very good and the pupils make very good progress in knowing and being able to talk about their Catholic faith. Pupils are provided with a rich and relevant curriculum, based on the Curriculum Directory. The introduction of the new scheme of work 'The way, the Truth and the Life' has been well managed. Pupils display very positive attitudes to their learning. Attainment is on a par with other core subjects and religious education makes an effective contribution to all aspects of school life. Moderation, both internal and also external in participation with deanery and diocesan moderation is used to ensure judgements are accurate. The leadership management and monitoring of the religious education teaching is very good, with staff benefitting from lesson observation and feedback. The school has very good awareness of its strengths and areas of development.

## 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 Catholic life of the school is very effective in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The experiences offered pupils of Catholic life are rich and varied. Religious education is at the centre of the life of the school and governors and senior leadership ensure that staffing, resources and accommodation are very good. The profile given to worship and prayer is very high and the planning for and resourcing of worship and prayer is outstanding. The parish priest who is the religious education link governor is closely involved in serving the school with the sacraments and many contributions to assemblies and liturgies. Pupils are appropriately involved in planning and preparation for prayer and liturgies. Links with the parish are very good and pupils and parents are articulate in their support and involvement in the life of the parish. The governors are at the heart of the promotion of the Catholic life of the school and monitor it closely. Pupils are able to give gospel based reasons for being involved in collecting money for the poor and dispossessed. They are engaged in their understanding of the importance of serving others. There is good and clear partnership with diocesan policies, inservice meetings and conferences.

## 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 seven lessons and two assemblies, and carried out six 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 Westminster Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Pimlico 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

Dcn Anthony Clark  
Mrs Ann Staunton

Lead Inspector  
Associate Inspector

## Description of School

The school is a one form entry in the LA of Westminster and the locality of Pimlico. The school serves the parish of Holy Apostles, Pimlico. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 1% and from other Faiths 0%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 58%.

There are 200 pupils on roll, with 4 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. 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 above average rate of families claiming free school meals. 62 of pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number: 213 3623  
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Headteacher: Mr Thomas Doherty  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Mary-Therese Fardon

Date of previous inspection: October 2008

## Key for inspection grades:

<i>Grade 1*</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Very Good</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 said the school should implement the new levels of attainment in religious education and review the supporting statements which qualify the Mission Statement to make them more accessible to children. The school has fully met these recommendations. The school has systems in place for the assessment of levels in religious education, with clear profiles for each level. Internal moderation takes place each term. The knowledge and familiarity of the pupils with the school's Mission Statement was seen across all the classes.

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

**Grade I**

The school implemented the introduction of the scheme of work 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' in April 2013 and this has enabled it to ensure that the content of the curriculum meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Religious literacy is a key focus. To assist pupils with each of the four themes of the Directory and with each topic, specific vocabulary is listed in the title pages of each topic and also posted on the classroom walls. The school employs the Here I Am scheme to deliver the content of and approach to teaching about Other Faiths. This area of the curriculum is being well taught. The school is implementing plans to provide all pupils with experience of other faiths with visits to places of worship. Visits of other faith leaders to the school are also being arranged. The pupils are making good progress in religious literacy to enable them to take their place and play a positive roll in today's plural society.

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

**Grade I**

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress overall is very good in religious education. There is much evidence that the school has developed secure internal monitoring and evaluation systems as well as at deanery level. This ensures that religious education is measured against the appropriate benchmarks and attainment is recorded and progress tracked in line with other core subjects. The planning, use of assessment and National Levels of Attainment, all assist teachers in making accurate judgments on pupil progress and attainment. Both internal and external moderation is used to ensure judgments are accurate and pupils are very positive about their learning in religion lessons. In all classes observed there were a variety of activities and pupils were enthusiastic, engaged and eager to discuss their learning. They displayed a thirst for knowledge and a keen interest in religious education. The school makes very good provision for all groups of pupils and pupils' workbooks and written work are of a high standard and very well presented with a clear sense of pride. Pupils spoken to said they enjoyed the variety of activities during religious education lessons and one year 3 pupil said, 'I love religious education lessons and the teachers make it interesting to learn about our religion.' By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils reach or exceed diocesan expectations.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade I**

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and teaching is typically very good and sometimes outstanding, resulting in children making very good progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they plan creative lessons, which consistently deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and build on previous learning. High expectations and clearly differentiated tasks ensure at least very good and sometimes outstanding learning. Behaviour in lessons was outstanding. The Wednesday Word provides homework opportunities that contribute to pupils' learning. There is good evidence of regular and accurate assessment of pupils' work. Marking is good giving pupils comments about what they did well and pupils are given opportunities to respond, but the practice of giving pupils comments that enable them to move to next steps in learning is not yet fully embedded across the school. The quality of teaching was measured through lesson observations, conversations with pupils in class and small group interviews with pupils, staff and governors, work scrutiny and documentation provided by the school.

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

### **Grade I**

The leadership and management of religious education are very good. The current headteacher who is relatively new in post has retained this role in order to ensure his management of the subject is founded on direct personal experience. Through going to the diocesan and deanery moderation meetings he has successfully gained first hand the knowledge and skills to lead and manage the subject. In the future there will be opportunities for another staff member to work alongside him in the leadership and management of this key subject. The insistence on and evidence for good moderation of the subject was recognised in the course of the inspection. The vision that religious education is the core of the core is communicated well and staff are very aware that it is to be at centre of all and celebrated. There is a structured monitoring cycle in place including book scrutiny, lesson observation, peer observations and data tracking. The school has made good progress on including religious education on SIMS enabling it to analyse religious education data as rigorously as other subjects. The school is able to report effectively to the governors on the progress and quality of religious education.

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

- Teachers should give clear and explicit EBI (Even Better If) notes in a consistent approach to helping pupils progress to the next steps in their work.
- Develop skills of pupils in upper KS2 to self assess against levels of attainment.
- Review provision of homework in religious education, taking into account the views of parents.
- Develop moderation skills and further experience in pitching work for the different levels of ability.

## **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?**

The previous inspection indicated that the Mission Statement and its supporting statements be reviewed and made more accessible to children. The school has shown initiative in responding to this recommendation and together with the pupils has designed an image incorporating related key words. In the course of the inspection reference to these words was regularly made. The Mission Statement is 'Love one another as I have loved you' and the keywords are Friendship, Joy, Achievement and Respect.

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

#### **Grade I**

The school is effective in placing religious education at the core of the curriculum. It devotes 10% of curriculum time to religious education fulfilling the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. Along with the other core subjects, religious education is generously resourced. The school ensures that teachers attend the CPD (continuous professional development) made available by the diocese. The school has invested in a new religious education programme 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' and has developed further IT resources to support it. The quality and extent of displays related to Catholic teaching and virtue were noted. In discussion with pupils, there is a clear pattern of how religious education values come up and are promoted across the curriculum. There is good use made of scriptural references and the availability of Bibles is being expanded. In service training is planned each year relating to the Catholic life of the school; in January this year the whole school INSET focussed on the new religious education inspection framework, assessment and collective worship.

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

#### **Grade I\***

The experience of Catholic worship, prayer and liturgy developed for the whole school community is outstanding. Worship and prayer are central to the daily life of the school and are a key part of every school celebration. In the course of the day, classes pray together and the richness of the Catholic tradition is experienced in a variety of ways. Class assemblies, liturgies, prayer services and class and school Masses are well planned, with the pupils being involved in their preparation as appropriate. There is weekly hymn practice and the pupils enjoy their singing with enthusiasm and engagement. The parish priest is actively involved with the school. He celebrates Mass regularly with the school, sometimes at the school and other times pupils come to the parish church in Pimlico. Lent and Easter talks and services are jointly and carefully planned, enabling the pupils to be closely involved in the Lent services and Paschal mysteries in Holy Week. In Advent and Lent he provides opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Staff and Governor meetings begin and end with a prayer. The headteacher and deputy headteacher offer outstanding leadership in leading prayer and worship. The school's weekly newsletter includes a section on the Catholic life of the school and a strong sense of the school as a Catholic community is promoted. There is good liaison with the parents, including a half termly newsletter and the weekly 'Wednesday Word' which enables each family to prepare together for the readings at next Sundays Mass. A particular home/school link is

the system of 'Mary Bags' whereby a pupil takes home a bag of religious items to set up a prayer corner to Our Lady at home for one or more days, and the family pray together before it.

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

#### **Grade I**

The school mission statement is explicit and permeates every part of school life. 'Love one another as I have loved you,' is the main vehicle for educating the pupils to the personal and social consequences of living out their baptismal promises and contributing to the Common Good. The whole school community have been involved in ensuring that the Mission Statement is accessible to all and the words; Friendship, Achieve, Respect and Joy are displayed in every classroom as well as common areas around the school. Throughout the school, all pupils have a clear understanding of how their mission statement calls them to serve and they do this through their charitable works. Pupils can clearly articulate the charities they support and were proud to present their fundraising efforts at an Assembly on the day of inspection, to a representative from Lepira. Pupils were able to discuss their fundraising to support their twin parish in Kenya through 5p Fridays.

The school sees itself as an integral part of the community and parish of Holy Apostles. The pupils could speak articulately on what they were collecting for and the rationale behind it. They were aware of how they were the recipients of gifts from God and that sharing with others was very important. The sense of responsibility for the well being of others and doing what one can both in the school and in the community and world beyond was evident in both pupil behaviour and in their verbal responses. Children clearly show their respect and value for each other and their individual gifts through assemblies and other events in school.

### **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 quality of the partnership between parents, school and parish is very good. The school strives to develop partnership with its immediate and wider community making links with surrounding schools. One such link is with the Westminster Cathedral Choir school, including working with the choirmaster to develop the school's choir. The school choir has sung with the choristers at Masses celebrated at the Cathedral to which parents have been invited. The school attends various celebrations in the Cathedral including the Good Shepherd Mass and the Christmas Carol service. Partnership with the parents is strong and parents participate in school events and initiatives. Communicating with the parents is a priority, carried out through weekly newsletters, website updates and the Wednesday Word. Partnership with the parish is excellent. The parish priest is a governor and has special responsibility for religious education. His involvement with the school and the support of the families and children involved with the parish contributes to the effective building up of the home, school and parish partnership. Participation in diocesan training opportunities is ongoing and includes the headteacher and deputy headteacher conferences as well as governor training and teacher in-service. The diocesan adviser is a welcome visitor to the school and the advice offered is acted upon. Diocesan guidelines are known and implemented.

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

### **Grade I**

The leadership and management of the school are very effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. There is a shared vision between the governors and staff, a vision which is open and proud of the Catholic nature of the school, of education and of its life. All staff, both Catholic and non Catholic are actively encouraged to participate in and contribute to the Catholic life of the school. The Mission Statement, including its pictorial representation and four key words, is integral to the approach of governors, senior management and teachers in the day to day life of the school community. The experienced Chair of Governors has a keen eye for ensuring that the Catholic life of the school is promoted and supported by the decisions and vision of the governing body. Many members of the governing body are parents and they contribute to the effective support of the school as a Catholic school. There are regular liaison meetings between the governors and senior management teach, following the agenda which is clearly link to the agreed School Improvement Priorities.

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

- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of planned worship and religious education to ensure consistency across the year groups.
- Develop further home/school initiatives similar to the 'Mary Bags' mentioned above promoting partnership and prayer with the parents.