

Westminster Cathedral Catholic Primary School

Bessborough Place, London, SW1V 3SE



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 17 October 2018

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory are well met.
- The school's focus on 'greater depth' in writing has resulted in an increased awareness of scripture and proficiency with Biblical references.
- Learners make good progress in lessons and books demonstrate progress is also made over time.
- Pupils are keen learners and their attitude towards religious education is very positive.
- Teaching is consistently good, resulting in most pupils achieving well over time.
- Teaching and support staff create a warm and affirming environment for learners.
- The leadership team and governing body have a good understanding of what is required to move religious education forward.
- The religious education subject leader has a real enthusiasm for her subject and is keen to improve teaching and learning.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Teaching needs to be more creative in order to engage pupils further in their learning.
- There is not yet an established culture of sharing best practice to improve teaching and learning.
- Pupils are not given enough independent learning opportunities to reach the higher levels of attainment.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- The mission statement underpins the work of the school.
- The school displays a commitment to ensuring prayer and worship are a part of daily school life.
- The parish priest, as the school's chaplain, is at the heart of the school's liturgical life; he is instrumental in the drive to develop wider opportunities for prayer and worship.
- The school's commitment to the Common Good and social justice is very well symbolised by the school's mission flower and its emphasis on growth.
- The school supports pupils well in developing their gifts and talents.
- Strong links have been forged with parents, the local parish, diocese, and other Catholic and community schools.
- The leadership team, religious education leader and governing body are fully committed to the Catholic mission of education.
- Together, the staff have worked hard to develop a vision and a bright future for the school and its pupils.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- The Catholic life of the school is not yet fully or publicly celebrated with displays.
- Pupils need further opportunities to shape and lead the prayer life of the school.
- Staff need further training on the nature of Catholic education and their role within it, so that they can contribute more fully.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, marking has improved in that next steps are now provided for learners but are not yet fully embedded. In upper Key Stage 2, the skills of learners have developed and they are beginning to self-assess against levels of attainment. Homework in religious education (RE) was reviewed and is now set fortnightly, however, not all parents are aware of this change. During the inspection, the Reception class effectively used their 'talk homework' to engage in the lesson starter on baptism and make more rapid progress. Moderation skills and procedures at both Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved and this is externally verified through attendance at deanery and diocesan moderation. The school has also focused on differentiating tasks to better cater for the different levels of ability and has thereby improved attainment.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of RE is good. The requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) are well met and in schemes of work the four strands are clearly identified. All teaching staff are familiar with the RECD and how the current programme allows for progression with a topic through the key stages. The school's focus on 'greater depth' in writing has resulted in an increased awareness of scriptural links and an adept handling of the Bible, particularly in Year 6. A range of resources is used to enhance the delivery of RE, particularly lower down the school. There is sufficient coverage of other world religions in an age-appropriate fashion.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Overall, pupil achievement is good. Learners make good progress in lessons and books demonstrate progress is also made over time. Achievement is in line with other core subjects and shows an improving trend, particularly at the top end. Leaders set aspirational targets but owing to insufficient independent learning opportunities these are not always realised. There are no significant achievement gaps among groups but where gaps do occur they are cohort specific. Achievement is tracked using prior attainment data as a baseline and leaders draw useful comparisons to writing. The staff are very aware of the vulnerable groups in the school and progress is monitored and underachievement tackled to minimise achievement gaps. Pupils are keen learners and their attitude towards RE is very positive. Pupils use subject specific vocabulary confidently and accurately.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good, resulting in most pupils achieving well over time. Teaching staff have high expectations of learners and plan with a wide range of individual learning needs in mind but not always to best effect. In the best lessons observed, more able learners received appropriate stretch and challenge but this could be facilitated in a more dynamic and open fashion. Best practice was observed in a Year 4 lesson on the story of David, where learning was active and pupils could make links to prior learning. Some staff have strong subject knowledge which moves learning on quickly but this is not yet consistent and needs to be addressed through the modelling of best practice. Learning support is a particular strength of the school. Planning incorporates considered and directed deployment of learning support assistants. In lessons observed a wide range of pupils with special needs and disabilities were effectively supported in small groups or individually. Teaching and support staff create a warm and affirming environment for learners which impacts positively on learning and contributes to pupils' wellbeing.

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

Leadership and management of RE are good. The leadership team and governing body are relatively new in post but it is clear that there is a good understanding of what is required to move RE forward. The RE subject leader has a real enthusiasm for her subject and is keen to improve teaching and learning. Monitoring and support systems have been put in place but these need to be embedded for the full impact to be felt. The subject leader is well supported by the headteacher; however, she does not yet have the autonomy needed to sustain a rapid drive for school improvement. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and correctly identifies strengths and areas for improvement with some strategies for how they are to be addressed. The governing body has been supportive in the maintenance and development of RE and have steadily supported the leadership of the subject. There are sufficient professional development opportunities for the staff to support the development of RE.

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

- Enhance existing teaching by incorporating more creativity in lessons, thereby engaging pupils further in their learning.
- Instil a culture of sharing best practice to include peer lesson observations and cross phase collaboration.
- Empower pupils to take ownership of their learning and promote independence in order to increase pupils' knowledge and reach higher levels of attainment.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, the school has developed the home/school partnership through the use of the 'Wednesday Word' and by seeking regular input from parents by way of questionnaires. There has also been a concerted effort on the part of the senior leadership team and governing body to raise the profile of the mission statement, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. This has proved hugely successful and it now underpins the work of the school, as evidenced by its frequent reference by staff and pupils during the inspection. However, the school has not succeeded in monitoring planned worship across the year groups, so this continues to be a priority.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

Pupils are offered a quality and experience of RE that is good. The pupils are given 10% of curriculum time for RE, which fully meets the Bishops' Conference requirement. Classrooms are well equipped and the simple beauty of the prayer tables is a reflection of the school's humility. The school resources RE well and a generous budget, in line with other core subjects, is allocated every year. The leadership team and governors are fully committed to the development of RE and, to that end, ensure that ample time and training opportunities for development are available.

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

is good

The school displays a commitment to ensuring prayer and worship are a part of daily school life. The headteacher's weekly assembly reflects on Sunday's Gospel and the pupils are then encouraged to live the message by way of a weekly class mission. The school celebrates all the key events of the liturgical year and, where possible, ties them in with the RE programme. Pupils are given regular opportunities to attend Mass at the local parish church and to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. During the inspection, Years 3 and 4 participated in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and were consequently able to use some sophisticated theological and liturgical vocabulary. To aid class prayer and reflection further, each classroom is equipped with a well-resourced and maintained prayer table and prayer book. The 'pupil chaplains' have been a welcome addition to the school but there is scope to develop their role by allowing them to be actively involved in both the preparation and leadership of worship. The school chaplain is at the heart of the school's liturgical life and is instrumental in the drive to develop wider opportunities for prayer and worship.

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

is good

Pupils respond well to the Church's call to action and are actively involved in raising funds for a number of local, national and global charities. This aspect of service, however, is not yet formalised in the life of the school. The school's commitment to the Common Good and social justice is beautifully symbolised by the school's mission flower. Its four petals emphasise the growth of the individual through the cultivation of 4 key characteristics: joy, achievement, respect and friendship. Each of these is explored with reference to the development and contribution of the individual within the context of community. The next step to develop this is to create a link between the mission and the call to justice and service as an integral part of being a member of a Catholic community. The school supports pupils well in developing their gifts and talents by providing a

number of leadership opportunities and these are celebrated through golden certificates and a house point system.

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's partnership arrangements have been a key focus for the school and as a result they are now outstanding. Strong links have been forged with parents, the local parish, diocese, and other Catholic and community schools. The feedback from the parents' questionnaire was plentiful and overwhelmingly positive. One parent commented that 'the school is a nurturing community with a caring ethos'. Communication with parents and carers is very regular and at every opportunity the school invites them to attend liturgies and events. The local parish priest serves as the school's chaplain and RE link governor. The pupils, staff and parents benefit from his very regular visits to the school and lessons. The headteacher and RE subject leaders regularly attend training organised by the diocese and the school has developed an excellent working relationship with their diocesan advisor. There is also a real commitment to the local community. For example, Year 6 pupils take part in an ecumenical 'leavers' service with other schools across the local area and staff members volunteer at the local homeless shelter.

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

is good

The leadership team, RE leader and governing body are fully committed to the Catholic mission of education. In the last few years, the headteacher has taken the lead on shaping the Catholic life of the school. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and displays a largely accurate understanding of its Catholic nature. Accurate areas for development have been cited and strategies to drive improvement have been developed. The governing body are analytical in their thinking and make a firm contribution to the Catholicity of this school. Together, the staff have worked hard to develop a vision and with sustained effort they will secure a bright future for the school and its pupils.

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

- Celebrate the Catholic life of the school more fully and more publicly through the use of display.
- Develop the role of the pupil chaplains and provide further opportunities for pupils to shape and lead the prayer life of the school.
- Provide training for staff to enable them to examine the distinctive nature of Catholic education and their role within it, thereby increasing their confidence to enhance their contribution further.

Information about this school

- The school is a one-form entry Catholic school in the LA of Westminster and the locality of Pimlico.
- The school primarily serves the parishes of Holy Apostles, Pimlico and Westminster Cathedral, Victoria.
- 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 is 3%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The pupils come from over five different boroughs. The two boroughs with the highest percentages are Westminster (74%) and Lambeth (13%). Both boroughs have particular areas of deprivation as well as affluence.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 90%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 1.
- There are 17% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 7 have an Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) which is well above the national average.
- 15% of the school population are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average at 47%, national (21%)
- 56 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (29%) which is above national (24%)
- The school does not have a nursery and does not have one feeder nursery. In 2018 the Reception intake of pupils came from over eight different nurseries all ranging from different settings.

Department for Education Number	213 3623
Unique Reference Number	101146
Local Authority	Westminster

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	192
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs	Mr Sebastian Wallace & Mr William Kenney
Headteacher	Mrs Alexandra Stacey
Telephone number	020 7641 5915
Website	www.westminstercathedralprimary.org.uk
Email address	office@westcatsch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 th June 2014
Grade from previous inspection	
Classroom religious education	Very Good
The Catholic life of the school	Very Good

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 1 assembly and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of samples 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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Lead Inspector

Mrs Theresa O'Sullivan

Associate Inspector

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