

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Bradley Road, Wood Green, N22 7SZ

Date of inspection: 11 February 2016



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 religious education is good. The curriculum offered to the pupils across the phases includes opportunities for developing their creativity. The triangulation of the evidence demonstrated that the religious literacy of all pupils is good overall, including their levels of knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith, its traditions and rituals. The governing body is fully aware of the next stage in their strategic plan, towards outstanding provision in classroom religious education. They have implemented a focussed plan to address this, since the beginning of this academic year. They ensure that the 10% requirement from the Bishops' Conference is fully adhered to. The leadership and management of religious education provide good role models, especially for inexperienced teachers and those new to Catholic education. The parents who met the inspectors spoke eloquently of how highly they value the way the school is committed to nurturing and developing the religious education of their children, across the phases.

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 outstanding effectiveness of the Catholic life of St. Paul's is a model of excellent practice. This includes their 'Spirituality Week' activities, classroom prayer and weekly assemblies, which empowers all pupils to reflect with wonder, awe and regular opportunities for stillness. The pupils, from the youngest age, have access to a wealth of prayerful opportunities, to develop their spirituality, faith experiences and links to their growing knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith in their everyday lives. They are articulate in describing the purpose of their fundraising and commitment to social justice. This dynamic call to human flourishing is a hallmark of the school's commitment to its mission in the church. Pupils receive the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, including ready access to the parish church, with its close proximity to the school. The governing body, in partnership with the newly established senior leadership team, has an extremely accurate understanding of the role of the school and its ecclesial commitment and identity in its mission in the church.

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 8 lessons, a collective act of worship and an assembly, and carried out 7 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 Paul's, Wood 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 Tina Cleugh	Lead Inspector
Ms Niamh Brady	Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a one form entry in the LA of Haringey and the locality of Wood Green. The school serves the parish of St. Paul the Apostle, Wood Green. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 95%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 5% and from other Faiths 0%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 67%.

There are 206 pupils on roll, with 3 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP). 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. Sixty eight pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	309 3504
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Headteacher:	Mr. Richard Curry
Chair of Governors:	Mrs. Grace Sylvester

Date of previous inspection:	November 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	2

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?

A robust and systematic tracking system is now in place. The newly formed senior leadership team is embedding the moderation process in liaison with deanery and local diocesan networks, which is mutually beneficial. Pupil voice is well developed, empowering pupil ownership on decisions, including fundraising, supporting their understanding and response to social justice and the common good.

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

Grade 2

The school fully meets the requirement of the Curriculum Directory, as set out by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, which forms the content of religious education. There is evidence of a variety of creative approaches, including drama, dance, role-play and artistic responses. There was evidence of tasks set which encouraged pupils to reflect and develop deeper levels of understanding. This is through a combination of the school's scheme of work and coverage of the liturgical cycle, response to the Year of Mercy and Pope Francis's call to respond to social justice. Very strong, visual prompts enhance the learning and provide enjoyment through effective use of ICT. This includes homework, which is set at age appropriate levels and the newly developed 'blog,' which enables pupils to respond to each other's ideas.

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

Grade 2

The good achievement by pupils is evident through a combination of the triangulation of scrutiny of the work in the books, planning information and the performance information, which is now robustly tracked and evaluated regularly. This ensures effective progress is being made in religious education. Pupils speak confidently of the importance of their learning in their religious education lessons. The marking is following a 'next steps' approach, which is not always consistently followed up in all classes, across the phases. The differentiation of the tasks set is generally by outcome, although often assisted by other adults. Tracking of the progress in religious education is now developed through the 'Target Tracker' electronic system. This is in line with the tracking of other core subjects. As a result of the opportunities provided for re-cap and consolidation of key technical vocabulary, with links to previous learning, the religious literacy of the pupils is good overall. The gap is narrowing for disadvantaged pupils, those entitled to Pupil Premium funding and those with additional and significant needs. The extremely high level of pupils for whom English is an additional language, are also making effective progress, particularly in the EYFS, coming to reception from a low baseline, often through no previous school experience. An example of this is where they were exploring the miracle of the Wedding Feast of Cana. Some misconceptions are not always followed up. The discussions held with different groups of pupils across the phases, indicate that pupils' understanding of how to improve their work is good overall. However, they do not always understand their targets for further development or challenge to their learning in religious education, and the leadership team has recognised is an area for action. This will ensure pupils can make effective

progress, across the different ability levels. They have identified the need to prioritise the opportunity for all pupils to know and understand their targets, to enable them to achieve and or exceed, their required levels of attainment in religious education.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is good overall. The learning environment is vibrant, with its range of inclusive and dynamic displays. It reflects the diverse and changing demographic of the school. All classrooms have displays related to the topics being delivered, including the key vocabulary to encourage the development of religious literacy. The work is consistently well presented, where pupils take great pride their efforts. Marking, to move pupils forward through their next steps in learning, is variable. At times, learning opportunities are missed, both in feedback and within some lessons. Where marking and oral feedback is effective, it supports pupils to move on in their learning. Although many references are made to Scripture, pupils need to be able to relate their learning and make effective links through actual access to using the Bible, on a more regular basis. In this way, they will further develop their skills in researching the text and using Bible references. There were some examples of pupil work in religious education displayed, including opportunities for extending and developing their ideas. There were some examples of good support and guidance to pupils with additional and in some cases significant additional needs by the other adults in the learning. This included support for those pupils to participate orally in the learning. Where support was less effective, pupils were regurgitating copied text, given by the adult, which denied them more effective learning opportunities. Talking partners was an effective strategy, used across the phases, where pupils were encouraged to share their ideas. This was particularly effective in an upper Key Stage 2 class, where pupils were empowered to use the 'visualiser', to share their learning with the class. The excellent teaching observed in some classes portrayed the impact of probing questioning, use of role-play, puppets and clear concise planning, which has effective differentiated tasks, to meet the needs of these pupils. The curriculum in religious education includes the exploration of other faiths, including Judaism, with planned visits to the Synagogue, Islam and Sikhism. The portfolios and the gallery section on the website, portray the range of opportunities enjoyed by the pupils through these cultural, faith and spiritual experiences.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership and management of religious education is good overall. The school is moving through a new transition period. The newly formed senior leadership team has a very clear understanding and shared vision of what the school is and what needs to be done, to embed excellent practices in the teaching and learning of religious education. The excellent teaching is being used effectively to role model good practice, for less experienced teachers and those new to Catholic schools. The governing body receive regular, accurate evaluations of the action plan for religious education, following the monitoring process of teaching and its impact on learning. This includes the scrutiny of work in the religious education books to track progress across the phases. The system is now in place for networking with local diocesan and deanery schools, where models of excellent practice are supporting the school's determination to move from good to outstanding. The senior leadership team has begun their series of continuing professional development, including the diocesan training opportunities, in-house modelling and coaching, through key networks with other schools. The strategic decisions are already beginning to impact on improving standards, through the drive, ambition and determination of the senior leadership team, led effectively by the Headteacher.

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

- Further develop the use of scripture to make links and embed the knowledge and understanding of meaning and purpose in exploring the examples of Jesus in their lives today
- Develop marking strategies to ensure misconceptions are addressed and that pupils have the opportunities to extend and embed their knowledge and understanding to signpost their next steps in learning
- Develop the subject knowledge of all staff, so that the levels of knowledge and understanding can be deepened, to underpin the topics being explored

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 school has implemented the 'Mini Vinnies' programme which empowers pupils to lead the cycle of topics in Catholic social teaching. Pupils were able to discuss with the inspectors, how much they value being involved in the school's commitment to supporting the homeless project in their parish. This provides pupils with significant opportunities to demonstrate their growing awareness and empathy to the vulnerable members of their locality. The variety of responsibilities allocated to pupils across the age range, include the opportunities for the head boy and head girl to participate in the interview process for the appointment of play and after school leaders. Regular homework is set for pupils in religious education, including the responses in the 'blog' which has ready access for parents to support their children's learning at home. Daily collective worship includes opportunities for parents to participate and share in the reflections with their children, including their opportunities to join in the school's 'thought for the day.' Collaborative networks are now supporting the continuing professional development, which is impacting on improved strategies for teaching and its impact on learning in religious education. The development of spirituality is significant, in particular how the pupils are responding to opportunities for stillness and contemplation, in prayer.

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

Grade 1

The school fully meets the 10% requirement set by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The governing body allocates a generous budget for religious education and the development of the Catholic Life of the school, reflecting its high status. The accommodation is clean and attractive, where resources are used effectively to create the rich range of stunning and colourful displays in all the public areas and classrooms. The preparation for the celebration of the Year of Mercy is powerful and complements their delivery of their social justice programme. The school's dedication to their patron, St. Paul the Apostle, whose charism permeates the school and is portrayed through extremely high quality paintings, child-centered displays and statues, influences their understanding of their commitment to be disciples in their everyday lives. The school has identified its intention to purchase more Bibles to enable pupils to have daily access in their lessons and in preparing liturgies and special acts of worship.

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

Grade 1

The outstanding range of opportunities for prayer and worship is central to all that the school offers on a daily basis. It is also an excellent example of how all members of the community respond to the invitations to pray both through planned and spontaneous opportunities. The inspection was carried out during the planned 'Spirituality Week.' The inspectors witnessed the powerful opportunity provided for pupils to plan and lead the 'stations' which create the culture for quiet, prayerful stillness. The 'stations' are points of reference around the hall for the pupils to reflect on a

range of stimuli such as illustrations of creation, the beauty of a flower, the powerful response to hold and treasure an olive wood cross and smooth stones. These tactile and sensory opportunities are providing a rich and unique opportunity for the pupils to experience a range of responses. The responses from the pupils across the age range are displayed on the prayer boards in the hall, for all to access and reflect upon, during the holy season of Lent. Each reflection is facilitated by a pupil, a member of the 'Mini Vinnies,' who is empowered to guide and lead the younger pupils in their reflections. Pupils were encouraged to 'open their hearts to God.' The assembly, led by the headteacher, offered the pupils an opportunity to reflect through stillness and contemplation on the meaning of Lent. This was related to their everyday lives, which was both poignant and prayerful. The 'prayer books' in the classrooms demonstrate the range of opportunities for the liturgical cycle to be celebrated and responded to, at age appropriate levels. This is also reflected on the school website and the 'blog' with daily and weekly reflections posted by the pupils. The close proximity of the parish church to the school is an excellent resource for the school community, who visit regularly, including through sacramental celebrations throughout the liturgical cycle. The pupils have the opportunity for celebrating the Eucharist in attendance at Mass weekly and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. The traditional prayers are taught at age appropriate levels, and pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in Catholic ritual and traditions, such as crowning Our Lady, reciting the Rosary in May and October, receiving an Epiphany blessing at the beginning of each new year, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the 'Washing of pupils' feet' on Maundy Thursday. Pupils are encouraged to pray at home with their families, through the weekly issue of the Wednesday Word. The response to the call from Pope Francis, during this holy Year of Mercy, includes their 'Mercy Door' at the entrance. This enables all pupils to be reminded of the value of their commitment and response to corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school. He is the link governor for religious education. During his interview with the inspectors, he outlined how the spirituality of the children from St. Paul's is evident during parish celebrations. Their depth of knowledge and understanding is portrayed through their regular, profound responses, which impresses both the parish priest and the parishioners.

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

Grade 1

The school's commitment to the Common Good and social justice are outstanding. Pupils are fully aware of the plight of those less well off than themselves. They are able to articulate the reasons why they are fundraising, and explained to the inspectors how they decide which charities to prioritise. The pupils have a clear understanding of the link between their role in the church and the opportunities for them to develop their human flourishing, whilst naming the links with their role in the stewardship of creation. They are confident to explain, that in order to follow the example of Jesus, through merciful acts and compassion for those less well off than themselves, they are living the true Christian life, 'as disciples of Jesus.' The parish priest inspires the pupils and staff in the range of activities in their response to social justice and the common good. He also referred to how without preparation or prompting, in their role as 'Mini Vinnies,' pupils were able to inform the parish, from the pulpit, about their involvement in preparing the homeless shelter. The parents who met the inspectors spoke warmly of how the school is preparing their children for adult life and their roles and responsibilities in society and for others. There is evidence from the work in their books, that the pupils are making links through their exploration of 'inspirational 'people' such as Oscar Romero and Mother Teresa. They learned about how, through their faith and courage, they responded to the call to social justice and the Common Good, which impacted on significant change and challenge to society. The planned work through the monthly topics, exploring the importance of Catholic Social Teaching, is taught at age appropriate levels across the school. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary. They are courteous, mannerly and can confidently articulate their ideas and response to the responsibilities given to them, both in school and in their parish life. They are wonderful ambassadors for their 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 outstanding partnerships between the school, parents and the parish are an excellent example of how the school has developed strong and effective links to further the work of the school. The parish priest spoke proudly of how the school complements the work of the parish and that the pupils benefit from the example received in school and in their parish life. The pupils are encouraged as altar servers, members of the choir, readers at school Masses and supporting through planned and spontaneous prayers. The school website is both informative and supportive to the community, especially how parents can easily access information and how to support their children at home, in their prayer and spiritual development. The introduction of the 'blog' engages pupils and their parents in their learning and development. The governing body is fully aware of its ecclesial dimension and the school's mission in the church. They ensure that it keeps up to date with new initiatives, regulations and requirements, including those set by the diocese. The inclusiveness of the community, particularly through their well-developed partnerships, including commitment and active response to those in need and the vulnerable, is worthy of note. Through all their initiatives, the school's mission statement, 'We will love God and one another, by respecting ourselves, respecting others and respecting the world around us,' is central and permeated through the daily life of the school.

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

Grade I

The outstanding leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school is an example of the excellent and highly effective partnership of the governing body, with the headteacher and his newly formed senior leadership team. The generous annual allocation in budgeting for religious education and the Catholic life of the school, is impacting on their high expectations towards sustaining the outstanding provision in the school. The dynamic dedication and clear vision of the headteacher is empowering the school on its journey through its identified actions and priorities. The accuracy of the self-evaluation document demonstrates how well the school knows and understand itself, in particular its strengths and areas for improvement and development. The schedule of continuing professional development includes school based in-service. It is succinctly linked to the identified priorities. This training includes the diocesan programmes, the role of the diocesan advisor, and her ongoing support to the school and the diocesan networks. The governing body, in partnership with the headteacher, and his new leadership team, have a clear vision and determination to actively lead the school through its strategic and coherent vision for the next stage on its journey, whilst sustaining its excellent practice.

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

- Purchase more Bibles for all pupils to have regular access to explore Scripture, to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the theology underpinning their learning
- Continue the process for strengthening further pupil ownership on Catholic Social Teaching, including the growing role of responsibility of the 'Mini Vinnie' pupils across the school