

St Francis de Sales Catholic Infant School

Brereton Road, Tottenham, London N17 8DA

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 26 January 2018



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The leadership of classroom religious education is good in this school. The executive headteacher sets high expectations for his staff and challenges them to attain high standards of learning.
- The content the curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Children enjoy excellent opportunities in the Nursery.
- Teaching overall is good. Some teachers encourage creative work that stimulates and develops pupils' learning. Pupils display good levels of spoken religious literacy. Behaviour of pupils all around the school is excellent.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are being well supported and make good progress. The higher attaining pupils are doing less well.
- The governing body are being well led and provide a good balance of challenge and support to the infant school.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities to develop writing skills in religious education are being missed in the Reception year and in infant classes. Work and tasks provided are often not sufficiently challenging.
- Half of all pupils leave at the end of Year 2 with skills, knowledge and levels of attainment below the national average. This requires improvement.
- Assessment and monitoring systems are not secure and lack rigour.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- This is a school that proudly proclaims its Catholic life in a rich and diverse way. It is clearly outstanding in this respect.
- 10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education as required by the Bishops' Conference.
- The work the school does around the development of the Common Good is exemplary. The school genuinely understands the call to human flourishing. Their knowledge of the messages and teaching of Jesus and of St Francis de Sales is highly developed for their young age.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are judged to be good. There are extensive opportunities within the school for daily collective worship and prayer.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are quickly introduced to the prayer life of the school in a sensitive and age appropriate way.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is carefully fostered in this school.
- Parents are highly supportive of the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The school is committed to partnerships and good relationships with parents, local schools and the diocese.
- Links with the local parish church are very strong. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and plays a key role in the Catholic life of the community.
- The leadership of the executive headteacher and the governing body in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The main area of improvement since the last inspection has been the formation of a religious education (RE) leadership team. This has resulted in a greater sense of collective responsibility for the leadership and management of RE. The governing body and the headteacher have worked on developing a vision of high expectations and associated values. Extensive training for new staff and non-Catholic teachers has been provided. The school has also worked on new systems of assessment and tracking of pupil's progress, knowledge and understanding.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of the St Francis de Sales Catholic Infant School religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). There is one core RE scheme from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 2. The curriculum is planned by the religious education leadership team. There is some evidence to show creativity in the teaching and learning of RE in some classes. Pupils are being taught about other faiths, including Judaism and Islam in an age appropriate way. The school has invested in a range of resources linked to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory such as Bibles. The structure planning and content of this school's RE curriculum and in class lessons is thorough. The liturgical calendar is being closely matched to pupils' learning. The curriculum gives the early years and infant pupils a good opportunity to begin to learn about many aspects of their Catholic faith. The programmes of study for each key stage and in provision for the under fives, illustrates where, when and how key areas of content are taught.

Pupil achievement in religious education requires improvement

Attainment on entry to the Nursery reflects a wide range of abilities and communication and language skills. Attainment overall on entry is broadly below the national average. Pupils leave at the end of Year 2 with skills, knowledge and level of attainment showing half below the national average. Therefore progress is judged to be requiring improvement. Attainment of pupils recorded by the school and scrutinised by the inspectors equally confirmed that overall attainment requires improvement. Pupils are not being given the opportunity to develop their writing skills in particular. In almost all classes opportunities to practice early letter formation and later to develop the skills of extended writing are not sufficiently in place in RE. Pupils were seen to have the ability to write well but this is not being reflected in their books. An example is the practice seen in many classes of putting the same photo or copied sheet in every book with no annotation or context provided. Standards of written work are below average in this school. Speaking and listening skills are however higher. This became evident when a group of Year 2 pupils were interviewed and were articulate and showed a good degree of religious literacy. One pupil said: 'Jesus died on the cross for us and sacrificed his life for us.' Another spoke about how: 'We need to follow what Jesus did. He told us to love another and respect our parents.' Pupils are assessed at the end of each topic. Pupils' progress is tracked and used to measure attainment and progress at the end of each term. The school's tracking and assessment systems are not however currently secure or accurate; these systems have not yet been fully reviewed in the ways they measure attainment and progress. Children enter to a Nursery environment that is well structured and is very rich in opportunities to learn and develop. Parents were seen actively involved in helping their children learn about a Ghanaian wedding ceremony. The Nursery is a rich language environment for young children. The children in Early Years also quickly acquire a wide vocabulary and learn the names of important people such as Jesus, Joseph, Mary and also St Francis de Sales. They also learn about a range of saints and about other religions such as Judaism.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are being well supported. The higher attaining pupils are not being stretched and challenged in their writing. Work provided is not being matched to their abilities in many cases.

The quality of teaching

is good

The quality of teaching in this infant school is good. Teaching is judged to be at least good in most classes. Many teachers have high expectations of their pupils while others do not provide enough challenge. Teachers do not always give clear guidance on how pupils could improve on their work. Pupils in Year 2 are learning how to improve their work but this is not yet fully developed. Planning is thorough and this ensures that pupils of all abilities are able to engage with the lessons. Teachers overall have sound subject knowledge of RE and are committed to delivering a good standard of education. This is most clearly in evidence when one observes teachers using effective questions with pupils, which is a regular feature of lessons but is variable. In some classes pupils were not given enough time to respond or think about their answers. Support staff have an important role in behaviour management and in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school does monitor the quality of teaching but reviewing recent records shows that the school would benefit from external moderation of its overall judgements and observations. The process currently is not rigorous enough. Behaviour of pupils in lessons, playgrounds and all around the school is judged to be excellent. This is a noteworthy feature of this infant school. Homework is regularly provided and is appreciated by both parents and the pupils. This was evidenced by the response of parents to a detailed questionnaire where the key role of homework was mentioned.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education

is good

The leadership of religious education is good in this school. The executive headteacher sets high expectations for his staff and challenges them effectively to attain these high standards. He is currently also supporting another school in a different London borough. He is supported by an RE leadership team who play a crucial role in promoting religious education within the school. There are structures in place to assess RE as a subject in this infant school. At this moment in time these systems are not secure. The school is reasonably accurate in its own self-evaluation (SEF). For example the school itself identified the following issue in its SEF: 'One area of development identified through monitoring is that staff need to be much more rigorous in their expectations of work completed in RE books.' This inspection affirms this key finding. The school is active in moderating pupils work at a deanery level and staff attend all diocesan meetings relevant to the development of RE. Training and professional development for staff is plentiful and available to all staff. The governing body is being well led by a committed, knowledgeable and realistic chair and the parish priest also plays a key role in the work of the governing body.

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

- Raise standards of attainment and progress in RE in all classes.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to practice their writing skills in RE books.
- Review its assessment systems for teaching and learning in RE to ensure rigour and accuracy.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has successfully addressed all areas for improvement outlined in the previous report. Parents are more involved in their children's Catholic life by receiving more useful information. The school has introduced the Wednesday Word and also a termly newsletter about the school's RE work and acts of worship. The school itself has highlighted the increased opportunities for pupils to participate in acts of worship as being a key development.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding

10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week. Resources are plentiful and have been chosen to cover all areas of the curriculum. The school self-evaluation states that: 'All the school's systems, processes, vision and values are focused placing Jesus Christ at the centre of all we do. As a result children 'preach the Gospel' through behaviours more than words.' This inspection confirms that the school is very successful in this area. Staff development training is planned for and is encouraged in this school.

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

Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are judged to be good. There are extensive opportunities within the school for daily collective worship and prayer. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are quickly introduced to the prayer life of the school in a sensitive and age appropriate way. All classes have prayer areas, a prayer focus and appropriate liturgical colours for the year. Displays of work and around the school are of a very high standard. There are some fine examples of artwork, crosses and displays produced by the young pupils. Children at all ages and all key stages play an active part in prayer and liturgy in a wide variety of ways. All Year 2 pupils know the prayers of St Francis de Sales and joyfully sang a hymn from the school's feast day to a group of inspectors. Evidence of a well-developed prayer and liturgical life in the school is clear from the school's website which also links to the local parish church. Prayer and worship are integral to the daily life of the school. There is a planned programme of prayer and morning assemblies. The school re-enacts the Nativity annually to which parents and the parish community are invited to attend, in the parish church. During Lent, pupils in the infants join in to re-enact the Stations of the Cross through drama, art and music with the upper key stage pupils. Music and drama are used effectively in assemblies and worship. Pupils do have the opportunity to lead and participate in these, particularly during Thursday assemblies. This is an aspect the school wishes to develop further.

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

This is a major strength of the school and is judged to be outstanding. The school genuinely understands the call to 'human flourishing' in its broadest sense. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents both in school and also in the wider world at large. The school has forged strong partnerships with a number of agencies who they support annually. Among these agencies are Catholic Children's Society Lenten Appeal, Cafod, local senior citizens club and Mission Together. Pupils also sponsor a child in Kenya in her education in a sustainable project. One area that must be noted in this inspection report is the work being developed to support older people in the local community. The school runs an over 60's Lunch Club

who share lunch with the school councillors in the school dining hall once every week. The school councillors have negotiated free lunch with the school's lunch provider and they now host this group most Thursdays. Some of these guests now stay on to read with groups of children in the school. This is an exemplary example of the Common Good in action. Pupils are developing understanding of some of the moral issues of the day and are eager to do good works in the world, even at this early age. The school's Mini-Vinnies are thriving and pupils want to carry this work on. In an interview Year 2 pupils spoke in a moving fashion about the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. The messages of St Francis de Sales are shared widely across this infant 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 good

This area is also a strength of the school. The school is committed to partnerships and good relationships with parents, local schools, the parish and the diocese. A parents' survey and questionnaire elicited a huge response in a short period of time. Parents are almost overwhelming in their support for the school and its leadership. The RE leadership team attend all relevant diocesan events and the school participates in deanery meetings when they occur. Links with the local parish church are equally very strong. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and plays a key role in the Catholic life of the community. Assemblies focus on the Gospel reading from the Sunday Mass. St Francis de Sales considers itself to be a part of the ecclesial community of the Diocese of Westminster and sees itself a valuable and committed Catholic school within the London Borough of Haringey and Diocese of Westminster. The headteacher is currently supporting school improvement in another Catholic school in the diocese.

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

is outstanding

The leadership of the executive headteacher and senior leaders in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Their vision and values to promote the Catholic life of the school are shared by the whole school community. The governing body is being well led by an experienced and knowledgeable chair. Governors make a significant contribution to the work and Catholic life of the school. Pupils' own voices are articulate in this infant school and pupils enjoyed talking about their school. They are rightly proud and happy to be attending such a caring and committed Catholic school. The schools' own self-evaluation of Catholic life is mostly accurate. The school judged itself to be good overall in this area. This inspection team judged them in fact to be outstanding overall in its Catholic life.

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

- Develop further the opportunities for child initiated prayer and worship that is appropriate for their age and understanding.

Information about this school

- The school is a 3-form entry Catholic infant school (part of an infant / junior federation) in the locality of Haringey.
- The school serves the parishes of St Francis de Sales, Tottenham.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 74%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 20 % and from other faiths is 2 %. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 56 %.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 4.
- There are 19% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 5 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- 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.
- There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 36 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (12%).

Department for Education Number	304 3509
Unique Reference Number	102149
Local Authority	Haringey

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	312
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Geraldine Normoyle
Headteacher	Dr James Lane
Telephone number	0208 808 2923
Website	www.sfds.haringey.sch.uk
Email address	head.federation@SFDS.haringey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 March 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 ten lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended a number of liturgies and 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 a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mr Sean Flood	Lead Inspector
Mrs Monica McCarthy	Shadow Lead Inspector
Ms Grace Anderson	Associate Inspector
Mrs Norah Flatley	Associate Inspector
Ms Aisling Meehan	Associate Inspector
Mrs Ruth Sykes	Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

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Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005
E: education@rcdow.org.uk
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>