



The Rosary Catholic Primary School

10 The Green, Heston, Middlesex, TW5 0RL

Date of inspection: 17 October 2014

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade 2

Overall, the effectiveness of classroom religious education is good. The quality of teaching is typically good and sometimes very good. The schemes of work are well informed by the curriculum directory and support pupils' engagement in good learning. As a result, pupils' progress in acquiring religious literacy is generally good. Children have positive attitudes to learning as a result of the very supportive ethos that encourages them to do their best. Very regular participation in worthwhile training events, including those within the diocese and the Catholic University, are much appreciated by all staff and promoted well by the good leadership and management of religious education within the school. All pupils, including those with specific learning needs, feel valued in lessons which are regularly monitored and staff well supported. The school is driving forward its work to ensure that the most able pupils have sufficient challenge to reach the highest available levels in religious education. Governors have a very clear grasp of the areas for improvement and work assiduously with the senior team to support the development of the pupils and staff.

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

Pupils receive a very good all-round Catholic education and have very worthwhile experiences of the faith and of Catholic traditions. Their understanding of what it means to live according to these traditions and teachings deepens as they progress through the school. Religious education is highly valued as the heart of the curriculum and all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference are in place. Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and this is clearly evident in the caring and respectful ethos and nurturing environment. There are excellent close links with the local parishes, with parents, and with the diocese as well as a strong partnership with other Catholic primary and secondary schools. There is a strong commitment to the Common Good with pupils growing in understanding of the Church's social teaching. The head teacher, together with the leadership team, has a vision for this Catholic school that permeates all of its work. Governors make a very significant contribution to the work of the school and its Catholic life. They are able to provide genuine challenge and support to help sustain this Catholic community.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, head teacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited an assembly and six parts of lessons. They carried out interviews with the head teacher and senior team, the religious education coordinator, a local parish priest, the chair of the governing body, a foundation governor and a parent governor. Inspectors also spoke with pupils. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire and brief discussion, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of The Rosary Primary School, Heston, 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

Sheila Nolan	Lead Inspector
Catherine Bryan	Associate Inspector
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Description of School

The Rosary Catholic School is a two-form entry primary in the local authority of Hounslow and the locality of Heston. The school serves the parishes of Our lady Queen of Apostles, Heston; St Vincent de Paul, Osterley, and St Christopher's Cranford. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 86.58%. The remainder, 9.27%, are from other Christian denominations and 4.94% are from other Faiths. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is approximately 71%. Thirteen members of staff hold a Catholic qualification.

There are 482 pupils on roll, with four of the pupils having 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 also well above average but the percentage of families claiming free school meals and in receipt of the pupil premium, additional government funding, is below average. A total of 91 pupils are in receipt of the pupil premium.

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Date of previous inspection:	16 March 2009
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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?

Since the last inspection, the school has developed the ways in which lessons in religious education are planned and how children's work is assessed and recorded. New units of work, recently introduced, have improved the quality of teaching. The school has given real assent to the importance of training in the development of the staff. In particular, the school has made use of the many helpful opportunities offered by the diocese. Work is on-going in developing the quality of marking and the way in which children respond to teachers' written guidance. The school is also working on new systems to record centrally pupils' achievements alongside other core subjects. Progress since the last inspection has been good and the school has a clear picture of where it still needs to further develop both staff's and children's work.

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

Grade 2

The religious education curricular map mirrors the requirements of the current Curriculum Directory. These are embedded in the teachers' medium-term planning. The strengthening study of scriptural texts is supporting well the development of pupils' religious literacy. Resources are regularly updated so that they increasingly and creatively support the work in classrooms. Progression in topics is planned. However, there is scope to focus the cycles of learning more carefully so that over the years the pupils can grow in their knowledge and deepen their understanding even further. Although there is a good focus overall on the key factors that develop religious literacy, the implementation within lessons does not always deepen pupils' skills and understanding as work is not always rigorously matched to pupils' earlier learning. The study of other faiths, including Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, is incorporated into the work of year groups. However, the potential of the very good school links in this respect are not used fully to extend the work of able pupils and build in-depth studies that support pupils in their understanding of the need to respect other faiths.

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

Grade 2

Pupils achieve well in religious education and mostly similarly to their achievement in other core areas. There is a half-termly assessment in place and diocesan moderation is well established with the school. The diocesan levels of attainment increasingly successfully support checks on how well the pupils are doing. However, too few pupils achieve the highest available levels for their age groups. From the earliest years, the pupils are guided very well to put their grasp of their learning in religious education into practice in everyday life.

Pupils generally make faster progress at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2, particularly the more able. Here, too, however, what is expected of those with barriers to learning is sometimes too low. Attainment overall, although similar to that in other core areas, is slightly less developed in religious literacy than might be expected. The work in pupils' books, as well as their engagement in class shows that pupils have positive attitudes to religious education but the language of narrative and doctrine is not assessed effectively enough by well-structured and well-considered tasks.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

Overall the quality of teaching is typically good. There were examples of very good and some outstanding learning in some lessons but the quality of the pupils' classroom experience remains too variable. Outstanding practice within the school has not been fully shared so that all staff experience a model of best practice in teaching religious education. Feedback to pupils on how well they are doing and on how they can improve written work is regular but often fails to pinpoint the best way forward for the pupils. Too often pupils do not respond to teachers' marking and so fail to make as fast progress as they should.

There is a very positive learning ethos around the school and pupils are keen to engage with tasks, be they reception children or Year 6 pupils. Support staff are well deployed to support pupils and lead groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were eager to identify the symbols associated with baptism while Year 6 set about their varied tasks enthusiastically, using a range of resources, including the corridor 'footsteps' in their work on the Church. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are reaching to deepen their understanding of what constitutes outstanding progress in religious literacy as part of their on-going development.

The current assessment procedures are being further developed to ensure they meet the pupils' learning needs very well and particularly that of the more able pupils. The school's monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate and the current emphasis on sharpening the correct use of topic vocabulary so that children can grow in the depth of their understanding is increasingly effective.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership of religious education is good and is reflected in the good progress of the pupils. There is a wealth of good will in the work of the coordinator and the staff team to do their best to develop the pupils and help them to grow in understanding of their faith. Although some essential systems to assess progress are in their infancy, there are clear plans to develop these further. Currently, the assessment of the pupils' progress is too general and does not demonstrate clearly pupils' understanding of topics nor their growth in religious literacy. The expertise of the staff in providing written guidance to the pupils on how to improve is variable and pupils do not always take advantage of this help by usefully reviewing their work.

Much effective training supports staff at all levels in developing their understanding of their work in religious education and particularly the school's involvement with the near-by St Mary's Catholic University. Staff engage well with training and with any monitoring and evaluation of the departmental work. They participate generously in the school's very good links with parents and other external groups. The religious education curriculum is shared with parents through the newsletter. In order to ensure that all have easy access to this information, the web-based newsletter is also available in hard copy on request. Communication with the parishes and local clergy is good. Parish clergy contribute well to religious education as do governors through their Catholicity sub- committee. The coordinator works closely with the head teacher and governors to promote well religious education across the school.

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

- Build upon and improve current assessment procedures so that the pupils' attainment and progress are rigorously checked and tracked in line with other core areas.
- Further develop marking practice so that it matches the best by ensuring all teachers pose developmental questions to help pupils improve their work and ensure that they respond effectively.

- Fine tune the planning of lessons so that the language of narrative and doctrine is meticulously promoted and pupils' religious literacy grows in line with their skills in core subjects.
- Use the very good school links and resources for other world faiths more fully to extend the work of able pupils and develop their understanding and appreciation for those from religious traditions other than their own.

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?

Since the last inspection, the school improvement plan includes a sharp focus on the Catholic life of the school. There are well-developed plans to include a Catholic life target in the performance management of staff. Closer links with the parishes have fostered and there is now a link on the school's website to that of the parishes, highlighting for parents the importance of developing the spiritual life of the pupils.

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

Grade I

Religious education is at the centre of the curriculum and is allocated at least 10% of the total available curriculum time. With regard to the budget, training and the environment, religious education is given high priority. A majority of staff hold a Catholic qualification and those who are not Catholics willingly uphold the teachings of the Church. Children from other Christian denominations and other faiths are expected to, and take, a full part in lessons and in the school's Catholic life.

Governors are very well informed about the quality of Catholic life and education and ask searching questions to support the development of the Catholic ethos. They work well and closely with the leadership team to develop and review the quality of the pupils' religious experience and are keenly aware of areas for further development. Succession planning for Catholic staff is well-considered and training is given high priority. Catholic literature is also readily available on both sites so that all members of staff are well informed about recent developments within the work of the Church.

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

Grade I

Prayer and worship are given a very high profile in the school and pupils are offered a variety of experiences of prayer and worship within the Catholic tradition. All parents who responded to the questionnaires confirmed that there are regular sacramental celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which they are invited to attend. The school ensures that there are opportunities for daily prayer. The clergy from nearby parishes work closely with the school so that children in the Early Years can understand at their own level and begin to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word. For older pupils there are many occasions when they celebrate Mass, both in Church and in the school. As yet though, pupils are not fully active in planning aspects of the liturgy and this is an area for further development.

The introduction of the whole-school liturgical calendar has been very positive in raising the awareness of children and their families of the seasons and major feast of the Church's year. As well as the carefully tended prayer areas in each classroom, the grotto and memorial gardens are very well used by staff and children to support prayer. The rosary, Stations of the Cross and Benediction are all experienced by the pupils as are other traditional Catholic practices. Years 5 and 6 are fortunate to take part in retreats, led by the school staff. Members of staff regularly pray

together and begin each academic year with a focus on spirituality. Religious artefacts and displays throughout the school provide reminders and stimuli for thought and prayer.

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

Grade I

The Church's call to action for justice and peace is well understood by staff and pupils. Both are actively engaged in supporting those in need whether through ongoing links with charities or in response to crisis, locally, nationally and globally. The children are very clear about why they do this. "Jesus fed people with loaves and fishes and we do the same, because we follow in his footsteps," said a pupil. Their on-going support for a school in Africa is just one example of this sustained activity.

Inclusive strategies for vulnerable and migrant families are very well established. Through a range of work to support the pupils' behaviour and through citizenship awareness, pupils are helped to take and develop responsibility. They do this with enthusiasm and commitment. There is a common sense of belonging at The Rosary and a strong sense of unity in the diversity of cultures and backgrounds. A notable strength of the school is that all relationships, adult to adult, child to child and adult to child are embedded in the life and teachings of Christ. Every individual is respected and valued and given the opportunity to try to reach their full potential and flourish, in line with the school's mission statement. The spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of the pupils and others that they try to help is at the heart of its work.

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*

Partnership is a vibrant and central part of how the school community understands itself in relation to the immediate and wider community. In its work with parents the school is outstanding in actively seeking ways to foster links and to develop a shared understanding of the Catholic mission of the school, and of the Gospel in action. The school is currently part of an aspirational learning programme to raise pupils' ambition and achievement across the school. Parents respond very well to such initiatives and appreciate the invaluable opportunities to work closely with the school. The Rosary School is a strategic partner of the near-by Catholic university, which involves the school in the training of Catholic teachers for the future. There is a strong sense of the community of Catholic schools, both within the deanery and the diocese. This opens doors to developmental opportunities for pupils and staff. Diocesan training and conferences are regular features of the school year.

The school serves three parishes, actively seeking ways to engage with each of them. Members of the parish actively contribute to the school's work. Parish clergy are regular and welcome visitors to the school and are fully involved in the sacramental and prayer life of the school as well as in effectively supporting the religious education curriculum. The governors know their school very well and regularly update their knowledge through diocesan training. They challenge the school and work together with the leadership team to ensure the Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Senior leadership, the driving force in the school's vision of discipleship for life, demonstrates a very strong commitment to Catholic education.

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

Grade I

The head teacher and her senior team, together with the governors, ensure that all aspects of school life are underpinned by the Church's mission as expressed in the school's Mission Statement, 'We learn together, we play together, we work together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God.' The distinctive nature and Catholic identity of the school is shared each term with governors and staff. Highly valued training opportunities help to inform and refresh the school community's understanding of its place in the family of Catholic schools. Staff are well inducted into the school and required to fulfil the on-going high expectations of the school leadership. Newly qualified teachers are especially well served in their introductory years in the school. Subject leadership is increasingly well supported and the school has plans in place to develop further management and leadership expertise in religious education for the future. The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. Its self-evaluation is generally accurate, and reflects the very strong capacity of the school to improve even further.

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

- Take forward plans to involve pupils in planning, preparing and leading aspects of liturgical celebrations.
- Take forward plans to ensure that there is sufficient expertise among the staff to develop future leaders of religious education.