

# St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls

Crownhill Road, London, NW10 4EP



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 7 & 8 October 2021

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The content of classroom religious education is outstanding. In all key stages, the content of classroom religious education (RE) meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.
- A wide range of creative resources are used to develop pupils' religious literacy through a focus on subject specific vocabulary. The curriculum also contains opportunities for pupils to learn at greater depth.
- The planned curriculum provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is exceptional.
- Pupil achievement is outstanding and has remained a strength of the school since the last inspection. Achievement in RE at GCSE is above that of other core subjects and significantly above national averages.
- Teaching is consistently good in RE lessons, with some examples of outstanding lessons, that ensure pupils make exceptional progress over time.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The subject leader for RE, together with the senior leadership team, share a very strong vision for religious education. There is a relentless focus on achieving high outcomes for all pupils, regardless of their starting points.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- St Claudine's is an extraordinarily warm and welcoming school and is instantly recognisable as a distinctly Catholic community. Prayer and worship are a central element of the school's life.
- The values of St Claudine are seen across all the liturgical activities of the school.
- The school's motto of 'with God's grace we excel and lead' can clearly be seen in the school's commitment to the Common Good. The school offers a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to support those in need through a range of different fundraising activities for local, national and international causes.
- The school cultivates outstanding relationships with parents, other local Catholic schools, local parishes, and the diocese.
- The high-quality retreat programmes offer students an opportunity not only for reflection and faith development, but also to work closely alongside the Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM) sisters.
- The school's governors, senior leaders and staff all have a clear understanding of the school's vision. All are deeply committed to the mission of the school. Governors share the strategic leadership of the school with energy and enthusiasm.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous diocesan inspection report noted several improvement points, focused around the tracking of pupils' religious literacy and the development of CORE RE post-16. The department has worked hard to address these action points and has clearly had success in making the necessary improvements.

### The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding. In all key stages, the content of classroom religious education (RE) meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Across Key stages 3 and 4, the broad and balanced curriculum provides a logical study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus, the sacraments, church history, and world religions. The programme of Core RE at Key Stage 5 is engaging and thoughtful. It challenges pupils to analyse some of the key ethical issues of today, such as human trafficking. One Year 13 pupil commented 'The RE curriculum has offered me the right tools to learn in all subjects.' Curriculum plans are rigorous and seek to meet the needs of all students. The planned curriculum provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is exceptional. Additionally, a wide range of creative resources are used to develop pupils' religious literacy through a focus on subject specific vocabulary. The curriculum also contains opportunities for pupils to learn at greater depth. For example, in Year 8 pupils are required to analyse the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in order to deepen their understanding of creation. The curriculum is further enhanced by a programme of speakers and visits to places of worship. For example, pupils in Year 7 have the chance to visit the local shrine of Our Lady of Willesden, pupils in Year 8 visit Regent's Park Mosque and in Year 9 pupils visit the Central Synagogue in London.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupil achievement is outstanding and has remained a strength of the school since the last inspection. Achievement in GCSE RE is above that of other core subjects and significantly above national averages. The RE department has developed clear and robust systems to track pupil progress and consequently all make excellent progress regardless of their starting point. A comprehensive range of resources are provided for all pupils to ensure they are exceptionally well supported in their learning journey through the school. The department is committed to internal and external moderation of pupils' work, which ensures that they are secure in making judgements about pupil progress. Pupil attitudes to learning are very positive and these have a consistently good impact on progress. Attainment at A level has significantly improved over time. Over two thirds now complete the course with A\*- B grades. The proportion of students who meet or exceed their challenging target grades is impressive.

### The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good with some examples of outstanding practice. The RE department has fostered deeply positive working relationships with pupils and consequently teachers set high expectations for all. These high expectations are seen not only in pupils' academic work, but also in their personal development and behaviour. This daily experience results in outstanding outcomes. Teachers plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' religious literacy, creating an engaging and inquisitive environment for learning. Pupils are keen to ask questions and debate issues in RE lessons. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on the life of Jesus, pupils keenly debated why Jesus faced opposition

from the political authorities of the time. The use of differentiation for EAL learners as seen in a Year 10 lesson on Judaism is highly effective, and results in students making brisk progress. The RE department has embedded strategies across the school that allow pupils to plan rigorous answers to assessment questions, which then aids them in preparing for their GCSE examinations. Pupils are provided with consistent and detailed feedback, which supports them in closing gaps in their understanding. Feedback also indicates next steps required for development and consequently pupils are clear about how to further improve their work. In the best lessons, learning moves at pace and there are opportunities for pupils to be challenged in depth. There are opportunities to embed this further across the department to ensure that all pupils get the same experience.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is outstanding**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The subject leader for RE, together with the SLT, share a very strong vision for religious education. There is a relentless focus on achieving high outcomes for all pupils, regardless of their starting points. The subject leader for RE has worked hard with the RE teachers to create a climate of success in which all are challenged to succeed. A deep understanding of the needs of pupils, coupled with an incisive strategic plan ensures the RE department has a clear plan for continuous improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the department is strong and the RE department has excellent systems in place that support teachers and have a positive impact on pupil learning. The subject leader models excellent practice and is dedicated to developing the team of RE teachers. Professional development, both in-house and external, are valued and effectively managed. All members of the team share resources and ideas to further pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the Catholic faith. Very good use is made of departmental meetings to discuss innovation, moderation of work and pupil progress.

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

- Further improve teaching by increasing pace and challenge for all pupils so that it is consistent in all lessons.
- Further improve the RE curriculum by considering the locality of the school and the make-up of the local community. Consider ways in which the school can prepare pupils for life in the wider world.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous diocesan inspection identified two areas for improvement. Firstly, to 'Continue to explore new and innovative ways of engaging students in personal reflection'. This action point has been partially fulfilled through the introduction of student leaders working closely with the chaplain. The second action point was to 'Explore how the liturgy committee can involve students in a more formal way in the reviewing and planning of liturgical celebrations.' This target has been met as the school has formed different liturgy committees. There is now a pupil liturgy committee as well as a governor's liturgy committee, both overseen by the chaplain.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

**is outstanding**

Religious education is at the very centre of the school and enhances the high-quality Catholic education the school delivers for all pupils. The RE curriculum meets the Bishops' Conference requirements for 10% curriculum time at Key Stages 3 and 4, as well as 5% curriculum time at Key Stage 5. It is evident to all staff that RE is the core of the curriculum. The RE department is well resourced with dedicated classrooms and a generous budget. Senior leaders and governors provide strong and effective support for the RE department.

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

**is good**

St Claudine's is an extraordinarily warm and welcoming school and is instantly recognisable as a distinctly Catholic community. Prayer and worship are a central element of the school's life. Pupils and staff take part in a wide range of engaging and creative celebrations for example rosary liturgies in October and stations of the cross during Advent. The values of St Claudine are seen across all the liturgical activities of the school. The school's assembly programme is clearly linked to the Gospel, world events and other religions. The chaplain, supported by priests from the local parishes, and other colleagues has worked hard to ensure pupils are offered the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and accordingly both sacraments are fundamental to the life at St Claudine's. The chapel is at the heart of the school and Mass is celebrated regularly for both pupils and staff on a weekly basis. The high-quality retreat programmes offer students an opportunity not only for reflection and faith development, but also to work alongside the Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM) sisters, with whom the school works closely. There is the potential for the role of the student leaders to be developed further to increase the impact of their work. Prayer is a consistent feature of tutor time, but there are opportunities for further formation of staff to support a greater variety and delivery of prayer.

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

**is outstanding**

The school's motto of 'with God's grace we excel and lead' can be clearly seen in the school's commitment to the Common Good. The school is involved in a wide variety of fundraising activities for local, national and international causes. The impact of this work is that the school consistently raises generous funds for those in very significant need. Pupils talk enthusiastically and confidently about their involvement in service to others and can reference a wide range of school activities to support this. The school also works closely with Bakhita House, CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society. Pupils appreciate that the values of St Claudine guide them to perform acts of

service and to support those less fortunate. With guidance students can articulate the underpinning theology of the school's commitment to the Common Good.

**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 cultivates outstanding relationships with parents, other local Catholic schools, local parishes and the diocese. Parents express overwhelmingly strong support for the school and feel welcome at masses and events such as the May procession, and the Mass of welcome that celebrate the Catholic life of St Claudine's. As one parent noted 'My daughter is so happy at the school and looking forward to a bright future'. The school seeks to work in partnership with its feeder primary schools by undertaking a wide range of outreach work. The chaplain and the RE department regularly attend diocesan training and have been actively involved in sharing good practice with other schools across the diocese. St Claudine's retains a strong working relationship with the Religious of Jesus and Mary. This has involved workshops, work experience and retreats, taking place locally, nationally, and even internationally.

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

**is outstanding**

The governors, senior leaders and staff all have a clear understanding of the school's vision. Governors share the strategic leadership of the school with energy and enthusiasm. They offer highly effective support and challenge to the leadership of the school on strategic issues. The headteacher is the driving force in the school's commitment to the education of young people with a vision of discipleship in life. The work and witness of the chaplain is inspirational and is at the heart of the school's work to authentically educate pupils in the Catholic faith. New staff are inducted in the Catholic life of the school so that they too may share fully in the identity and the mission of the school. Retreats are organised for staff to enable them to come together to develop the school's vision and mission. The school sees itself as a family and this was echoed by a pupil in Year 9 who talked about the school as '*a very friendly, second family who are willing to help anyone in need. Everyone is part of our community.*'

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

- Further embed the partnerships with local Catholic primary feeder and other local primary schools.
- There are opportunities for the school to develop tutor time prayer with more innovative and creative experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition.

## Information about this school

- The school is a 6 form entry Catholic academy school in the locality of Brent.
- The school serves the parishes of the Shrine of Our Lady of Willesden, Harlesden and St Mary Magdalen church, Willesden Green.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 40%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 30% and from other faiths is 27 %. The remaining pupils (3%) are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 40%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 6.
- There are 116 pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 7 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 an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 163 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (20 %).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	3045404
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137994
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Female
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	835
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body and DOWAT academy trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Danny Finnegan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Louise McGowan
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 8965 2986
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stclaudines.co.uk">www.stclaudines.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@stclaudines.co.uk">office@stclaudines.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2-3 October 2014
<b>Grade from previous inspection</b>	Outstanding
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Outstanding
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	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 13 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 2 assemblies 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, multiple scrutinies 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 Adam Hall	Lead Inspector
Mr Matthew Dell	Shadow Lead Inspector
Ms Katherine Sheridan	Associate Inspector
Mr Nick Kehoe	Associate Inspector
Mr John Carrigy	Shadow Associate Inspector

## Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

### Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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