



# Diocese of Westminster

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## **Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School**

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DFE Number: 919 3424

URN Number: 117493

Headteacher: Mrs M Fusi

Chair of Governors: Mrs F Clark

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Date of previous inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan

Associate Inspector: Mrs L Barton

## **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 six lessons, attended one assembly and carried out six 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 Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Ware was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule 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.

## **Description of School**

The school is a one form entry primary school in Ware in the local authority of Hertfordshire. The school serves the parish of Sacred Heart Ware. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 90%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 6%, other faiths 2% and no faith 2%.

There are 206 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is also below average. There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals. The school receives the Pupil Premium for seven children.

### **Key for inspection grades:**

*Grade 1\*: Outstanding;*  
*Grade 1: Very Good;*  
*Grade 2: Good;*  
*Grade 3: Requires improvement;*  
*Grade 4: Causing Concern.*

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

**Overall Grade: I**

The overall effectiveness of curriculum religious education is very good and meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and forms the basis for the programmes of study, supported by the 'Year of Faith' units and the recently implemented scheme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life.' The quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are generally very good. Pupils make good progress through the challenge and expectations of their teachers. Effective structures are in place to ensure good quality teaching and monitoring. Self-evaluation is accurate and indicates a good knowledge of the school and the development areas for religious education. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and there are very good structures in place to support new members of staff. There is a commitment to on-going professional development to enable staff to improve and develop the teaching of religious education. The headteacher, who is also subject leader, gives religious education a high priority which permeates all aspects of the life of the school.

### **What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?**

There were three areas for development in the last inspection report. These were: to further develop assessment procedures so that information gained informs future planning; moderate assessment outcomes to ensure consistency of judgements across the school; incorporate visits to places of worship of other faiths and include more visits from members of other faith communities in the religious education curriculum. The school has responded very well to the first two areas and is in the process of implementing the third. 'Other faiths' week is included in the curriculum and a speaker on Islam has visited. All staff are to attend a course on the teaching of world faiths next year.

To further improve classroom religious education in the light of the new framework, the school has identified that it should:

- Ensure the implementation of the recommendation regarding extending pupils' appreciation of other faiths.

- Fully implement the new scheme of work ensuring that the appropriate areas of the Curriculum Directory are embedded in all planning.

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

**Grade I**

The content of curriculum religious education meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The four strands are used to very good effect and are clearly identified in medium term planning. The school has been using the 'Year of Faith' units and has recently begun to use 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme. Staff are very well supported by the subject leader in their medium term planning. She identifies the links to the Curriculum Directory and the resources used. There is regular monitoring of the curriculum, planning, workbooks and pupil learning. There is evidence of imaginative use of resources and a wide range of activities to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.

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

**Grade 2**

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress in religious education are good. Pupils enter the school around the national average and make good progress from Foundation Stage onwards. This has been achieved by careful monitoring, a significant investment in resources, staff training and use of support staff. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards generally meet diocesan expectations. Lessons observed provided evidence of very well motivated pupils who are actively engaged in their own learning. Pupils make good progress and are encouraged to become independent learners. They take pride in their work and respond well to their teachers' advice on how to improve. There is evidence that pupils are attaining a good standard in knowledge and understanding of religion and are developing an ability to reflect on meaning. The subject leader has recently begun a system of whole cohort tracking to ensure all groups meet their full potential in religious education.

## **The quality of teaching**

**Grade 1**

The quality of teaching is generally very good. Lessons observed across the school during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding and gave evidence of high teacher expectations for all groups. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a wide range of strategies to engage the full range of ability. Workbooks are very well presented, marking is positive and developmental with questions to probe understanding and deepen knowledge. Class teachers use time well and pupils are given opportunities to develop new skills and build on previous learning. A range of cross-curricular activities including art, IT, and role-play are used to engage pupils in their learning. Tasks are appropriately pitched to enable pupils to express their religious literacy and there is very good challenge for more able pupils. Four teachers hold the CCRS certificate or equivalent. All teachers have good access to in-service training both in-house and provided by the Diocese. Regular monitoring of teaching is in place followed by discussion and support as necessary. Good assessment procedures have enabled teachers to plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Parents are able to support their children's learning through homework, invitations to liturgies, masses and other events and regular curriculum newsletters.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

**Grade 1**

The leadership and management of religious education is very good and has a positive impact on the life of the school. The headteacher who is also subject leader is very well supported by her staff and governors. She has raised the profile of the subject by taking on the role on a temporary basis and ensures that clear vision and direction for religious education is shared by the whole school community. The mission statement, 'Live, love and learn joyfully in the family of Christ' is well known by pupils. School leaders ensure that very good support is given to new teachers and teaching assistants. High expectations for staff and pupils ensure that religious education is at the core of the curriculum. Staff are very well supported in their teaching through in-service training and frequent continued professional development. There is a good range of resources and the learning environment for religious education is very good. Religious education is given priority in the school improvement plan which clearly identifies areas for development and how they are to be achieved. Members of the governing body are familiar with current developments in religious education which enables them to support the school. Eucharistic celebrations are held in school or in the nearby church and the parish priest is a frequent visitor to school celebrations and events.

## **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 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: I**

The school is very effective in developing pupils' experience in the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The leadership and vision of the headteacher and school leadership are instrumental in ensuring that worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and are well planned and resourced. Religious education is valued and recognised as the core of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to reach their full potential academically, spiritually and morally by all staff. They are involved in the planning and preparation of liturgies as well as given opportunities to become involved in social justice issues. The governing body includes members who have a strong commitment to the school's vision of itself as a Catholic community. Good links with parents, parish and Diocese demonstrate the school's commitment to partnership and its clear identity as a diocesan Catholic school.

### **What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school?**

Since the last inspection the school has made good progress on the areas identified. Pupils have continued to be given many opportunities to contribute to school liturgies and class masses. Links with a school in Gambia have given pupils additional opportunities to reflect on the commitment to the wider community. All staff have been well supported as the school implements the new Diocesan Framework and the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.

To further develop the Catholic life of the school,

- pupils should be given opportunities to understand and reflect on the theology underpinning the Gospel call to justice
- the school should continue to develop its links with the diocese.

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

**Grade I**

Religious education receives 10% of curriculum time and has a similar budget to other core subjects. Resources are good and there are plans to replace classroom bibles. There is a very good learning environment through attractive displays in classrooms and other areas of the school. Each classroom has a prayer table which is organised by pupils and used as a focus during classroom prayers. School leadership offers strong support in developing and reviewing the quality of religious education. All

staff receive in-service support and training relating to the Catholic life of the school. Members of the governing body have received training to enable them to provide support in reviewing and developing the place of religious education. The priest from the local parish liaises with the school for a planned programme of masses and liturgies and is a frequent visitor to the school.

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

**Grade 1**

The school's provision for prayer and worship is very good. Pupils are given opportunities for prayer, meditation and reflection within the Catholic tradition and examples were seen during the inspection. Pupils are enabled to participate and contribute to a wide range of worship and plan and initiate some assemblies. The liturgical year forms the basis for many of the prayer and worship opportunities. During the inspection a 'Welcome to the Gospel' assembly with a focus on putting trust in God, included prayer, music, and gospel readings. Singing was very good and pupils participated with respect, reverence and enthusiasm. Religious education lessons often include prayers and sometimes end with a simple liturgy. Parish led sacramental preparation is supported by the school. Pupils are engaged in the preparation of liturgies and masses which are part of the school's provision. Spiritual development is nurtured through the whole curriculum and religious education, which permeates the wider life of the school. Parental questionnaires indicated that parents were very positive about invitations to Masses, liturgies and other school celebrations.

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

**Grade 2**

The school is welcoming, inclusive and emphasises the uniqueness of each person. The need to value diversity and show respect to those from different backgrounds and cultures is demonstrated through the curriculum. The school has a good understanding of the importance of service and support for those in need. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to support local and national charities as well as raising funds to support a school in Gambia. They visit elderly people in a local care home and have good links to the parish. Conversations with members of the school council and older pupils indicate that they are given many opportunities to support their school as prefects and buddies. They are given responsibilities ranging from helping younger pupils at break times to offering suggestions for school improvement. Their gifts and talents are developed through a wide range of extra-curricular activities and acknowledged in a weekly 'Celebration' assembly to which families are invited. They now need to be given more opportunities to understand that social justice is based on the teachings of Jesus and gospel values. Behaviour and relationships within the school are very good.

**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 1**

Governors, headteacher and staff see partnership between parents, school and parish as a central part of the school's understanding of itself with its immediate and wider community. Parish links are very good and pupils visit the church frequently for Masses and to deepen their faith and understanding. Pupils are involved in preparing and participating in special services in the parish. The school works closely with parents and carers through meetings and questionnaires, which indicate that families are appreciative of all that is done to enable their children to grow in faith. There is a

very good level of family attendance at assemblies and liturgies. Links with the Diocese are being developed through participation in training offered through the Westminster Education Service for both staff and governors. The headteacher attends diocesan meetings and ensures staff and governors are aware of current developments.

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

**Grade I**

The leadership of the school is committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrates this by providing a curriculum with spiritual and moral development at its heart. The headteacher, governors, and senior staff ensure that the Catholic life of the school is central to all its work. Pupils are given many opportunities to know the life and teachings of Jesus and the traditions of the Catholic Church. Leaders share a vision of the nature of Catholic education and work with staff, pupils and families to move the school forward. All aspects of school life are underpinned by the mission statement. Each class has an attractive prayer focus and a display area which emphasises the importance of religious education. Governors have a clear understanding of their role in safeguarding and promoting the Catholic life of the school.



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### **Key for inspection grades:**

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### **A. Classroom Religious Education**

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

**Overall Grade 1**

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

Grade 1

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

Grade 2

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

### **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 place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget.

Grade 1.

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

Grade 1

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

Grade 2

The 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 1

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

Grade 1