



Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School

19 Cirencester Street, London W2 5SR

Date of inspection: 11 June 2014

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade 1

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education (RE) in developing pupils' religious literacy is judged to be very good. The main reason that it is very good is because of the high quality of leadership and some outstanding teaching seen in many classrooms. The pupils get a very good start in the Early Years of the school in a safe and nurturing environment. Achievement is at least good or very good in most areas of the school. This is especially noteworthy in this school because of the recent very high rate of pupil mobility. Pupils enter the school below national averages and leave either at or above the national average; therefore progress is very good. All pupils achieve well and the school is fully inclusive. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses play a very effective role in lessons helping pupils to learn. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is good but with a change in recording format could be even better. The creative religious education curriculum in place results in high levels of pupil engagement and enthusiasm in lessons and assemblies. Behaviour in the school is also of a high standard at all times and the pupils do their families great credit in this area. Governors are supportive and have a good sense of where the school is currently and some good ideas for the future. The leadership of religious education by the headteacher and her team is outstanding.

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 school's overall effectiveness in this area is very good. This is because of the vision and commitment over time of the headteacher and her leadership team. The school has achieved some outstanding successes in this area and has had to overcome some considerable challenges. The school places a very high emphasis on developing the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing for its pupils and the wider community as a whole. Prayer and worship in the school is very good and opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development are plentiful.

The prayer corners and general display areas of the school need enhancing and further attention. Pupils are also given lots of opportunities to be of service within the school and to the wider world. The pupils love to discuss their charity work and why they want to be of help and service to others. The school currently has no long term sustainable overseas projects to support and this needs to be developed. The school works tirelessly and ceaselessly to promote partnership work at all levels and is outstanding in this endeavour. Leadership of the Catholic life is also judged to be outstanding.

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 1 day in school, visited 11 lessons and 1 assembly, and carried out 5 interviews 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.

The Inspection of Our Lady of Dolours was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and the 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

Mr Sean Flood Lead Inspector
Ms Catherine Bryan Associate Inspector

Description of School

The school is a one and a half form entry Catholic primary school in the Local Authority of Westminster and the locality of Paddington. There is an intake of 45 pupils per year. The school serves the parish of Our Lady of Sorrows, Paddington. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 71%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 6% and from other faiths or no faith declared is 23%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 64%.

There are 290 pupils on roll, and 6 pupils with a statement 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 above average. There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals. 148 pupils receive the Pupil Premium. The mission statement of the school states: "At Our Lady of Dolours Catholic School we believe that each person reflects the image of Christ".

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DFE Number: 213381
URN Number: 101124

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Alley
Chair of Governors: Mr Steve Maingot

Date of previous inspection: 14th October 2008

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?

The key issue highlighted in the previous inspection has been fully addressed. Pupils are now given much more opportunity to use ICT for both art and research based activities linked to the religious education (RE) curriculum. ICT is now an integral part of school life and is being well used. Other developments have been around the area of the teaching of other faiths; this is an area which is now much more robust. Another area has been an increased emphasis on using direct scripture in everyday religious education.

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

Grade I

The content of Our Lady of Dolours Catholic School religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The curriculum is well planned for by the senior religious education team. The school uses as its core curriculum the *Come and See* scheme of work and supplements this with other resources such as the units of work provided by Margaret Carswell. The school has made a commendable effort to enhance its religious education provision in a creative way by utilising music, art and drama to very good effect. The school has won national awards for its interfaith artwork. Pupils are taught about other faiths such as Judaism and Islam in an appropriate way and visits to various places of worship area regular feature of school life. The school has invested in a wide range of resources linked to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and the *Come and See* scheme. The structure, planning and content of this school's religious education curriculum is imaginative and comprehensive.

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

Grade I

Pupil achievement overall is judged to be very good. The children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage of the school. Progress is consistently good throughout the school. Pupils enter the school either below or well below national averages and leave in Year 6 either at or often above national averages therefore overall progress is deemed to be very good overall. As soon as children enter the school they get a rich and varied experience of Catholic education. Via a combination of paint, play and emerging writing they quickly can record their thoughts and ideas. The children are introduced at a very early stage to the names of key figures of faith such as Jesus and Mary. Some very good examples of children's early work were seen in both the nursery setting and in the reception class. Photography was also being well used in both early years and in Key Stage 1. By Year 2 the work seen was of a good standard such as good use of diaries and accounts of Palm Sunday and this steady progression continues all the way into Year 6 where some examples of very good work were seen. Opportunities for extended writing start early and in Key Stage 2 some very good writing was seen on the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and in analysing the scriptures describing the Road to Emmaus. Also worthy of note was some of the extension work seen in Years 5 and 6 on the lives of great people such as Maximillian Kolbe and Fr John Bosco. The school has good monitoring and assessment procedures and a wide range of expertise to moderate mostly accurate judgements according to the national levels of attainment. The school

engages in moderation work at both diocesan and deanery level and the subject co-ordinator has then shared this information with colleagues. Most teachers have a clear understanding of levels and are becoming quite skilled in evaluating work. Higher order thinking is actively encouraged in the school through clever use of questioning. Levels of attainment are recorded for every topic and an overall summative end of term level is also given.

The quality of teaching

Grade I

The quality of teaching across the school is clearly very good overall with a significant proportion of outstanding lessons seen. Teaching is securely very good across time as evidenced by a work scrutiny and by examining planning and via lesson observations. The school itself rates 90% of teaching as being very good and this inspection broadly concurs with this. Regular support is given to teachers and succession planning is also well advanced in this school. Any weakness in teaching has been clearly identified and robust action has been taken to ensure that this does not affect learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and at all ages ask some detailed and at times searching questions. Teaching right the way through the school from Nursery to Year 6 is very good with no obvious gaps. The role of the nursery nurses and teaching assistants also needs to be commended as they played key roles in all lessons seen and greatly helped the pupils to thrive. Pupils with special educational needs are being well supported in their learning. The school has started to use Religious Education Learning Walls and this could be a very useful feature for improving teaching and learning even further, and needs to be monitored for effectiveness by the school. Pupil behaviour in both lessons and around the school is of a very high order and most pupils are focussed and engaged learners during lessons. Enjoyment and enthusiasm were very evident in most lessons seen and the pupils clearly enjoyed the creative curriculum presented to them. ICT is being well used and in one very good Year 6 lesson pupils produced in a very short time a high quality Powerpoint on the theme of the Good Samaritan. Visual literacy in religious education is a strength of the school. Pupils do become more independent learners as they progress through the school and some very good writing was seen in the Years 4, 5 up to 6. This also includes the mixed age classes. A small minority of parents wanted more religious education homework and the school is looking into ways to even further encourage parents to help the school teach religious education. Marking is developing well in the school and pupils do know how to improve their work and are starting to respond to detailed comments from teachers.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade I*

The leadership and management of religious education are outstanding. This is because of the commitment of the headteacher and her staff at all levels. Leadership of religious education is distributed well and is sustainable. The subject leader in religious education has clearly been highly effective in his role for the last three years. Governors recognise that their work is on-going in its development and have good expertise to help the school in the future by challenging and supporting it appropriately. The senior leadership team have ensured a high level of competency among all teachers and non-Catholic teachers are being very well supported. Professional development opportunities are plentiful and are eagerly taken up by staff. Moderation and assessment procedures are mostly accurate and are seen as on-going process to increase teacher awareness of levels. The school does share its expertise at both deanery and diocesan level at every opportunity. The monitoring of teaching is effective but the recording sheet used to give teachers feedback on their lessons is too vague and needs to be sharpened up much more to deal with observed strengths and weaknesses. The school faces some unique challenges in its mission in the 21st century, especially around pupil mobility which is huge and almost unprecedented in this school. The head and her

leadership team have coped remarkably well with this challenge. They provide a very good standard of classroom religious education for the pupils and a creative and vibrant environment for religious education to flourish, therefore leadership and management is judged to be outstanding.

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

- Review the monitoring forms of the quality of teaching to give teachers greater guidance on strengths and weaknesses in lessons
- Continue to develop the working walls and marking and feedback systems so that pupils know clearly what they have to do to improve their work.
- Use the new ICT tablets to enhance even further the very good creative RE work being done in this area.

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 key issue identified in this area during the last inspection concerning visitors and visits to help pupils learn about other faiths has been very well addressed. Visits to the Eastern Rite Church and to synagogues and mosques are now frequent and are well planned for. Other areas that have improved are centred around the school supporting the parish, with the permission of the Bishop to teach the First Holy Communion programme and in developing school Masses.

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

10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week. This is planned and monitored for compliance by the headteacher and senior leadership team. The school views religious education as a core subject in the curriculum and as such, time, money and resources are given in accordance with this high status. The timetabling of religious education needs to be reviewed in some classes to ensure appropriate length of lessons and to ensure that they are spread out more across the whole day. A decent annual budget is allocated and extra resources, such as Bibles, are provided as and when required. Teachers have mostly very good subject knowledge of religious education and high expectations of pupils in accordance with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* for England and Wales. New and also non-Catholic teachers to the school are being well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education. The accommodation in a complex building is currently being extensively renovated and renewed to a very high standard. Displays and prayer focus areas and corners are not of good quality around the school, and do not reflect on the very high standards of religious education in the school. This is a key area for future development.

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

Grade I

Prayer, liturgy and worship are central to the daily life of this school and are evident in a wide variety of settings. The school provides frequent opportunities for the pupils and families to attend Mass and this is greatly appreciated by the parents. The main events of the Liturgical Year are carefully mapped and celebrated in a variety of ways by the school. The pupils are very aware of the main events of the Liturgical year. The Sacramental life of the school is very strong throughout the whole school year. There is a regular rota for all pupils to take part in class assemblies which provide opportunities for spiritual development via art, music, dance and drama. Music will be an even larger part of the school in the future following the appointment of a new music specialist. Prayer is an integral part of school life and right from the reception class pupils are encouraged to both learn traditional prayers of the church and also to compose their own thoughts and prayer intentions. The Rosary features highly in the school in a wide variety of areas. Pupils were seen participating in and leading acts of worship during the course of this inspection. The school does monitor and record its provision for prayer and worship and actively seeks ways to enhance it even

further. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school at all times. The school would like to make more space and time for meditation and contemplation

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

Grade I

The school is quite advanced in this area in many ways. The programme of visits to synagogues and mosques is highly developed and on-going in developing community cohesion and understanding of other faiths and cultures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take on a wide variety of roles and responsibilities within school such as becoming prefects and monitors and “playtime supporters” during the lunch breaks. Behaviour of all pupils in and around school is of a very high standard as a result. The school is fully representative of the community it serves and in recent times has lost over 35 large families due to changes in housing benefits. The school has coped remarkably well with this and uses this experience to try and foster help and support for those in need in the local area. Pupils were keen to discuss their charity work and were able to articulate the theology that underpins so much of their work towards the Common Good. A very good example of this was seen in the Years 5 and 6 classes where debates and the parable of the Good Samaritan were related to contemporary issues in a very effective way. Pupils are also keen to help overseas and do know about CAFOD but have no long term sustainable projects that they can commit to and see develop in the future. This is a key area for the future.

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*

This is major strength of the school in so many ways. The partnership with parents is strong at all levels and the questionnaires and school surveys show parents greatly appreciate the life and Catholic mission of the school. The head herself is hugely respected within the local community and greatly valued by parents as evidenced by almost every comment and via confidential responses in a questionnaire. She and the school work tirelessly together to promote even greater links in some very challenging circumstances and this needs to be recognised. The school seeks to develop clergy support of families to nurture and support the community even more. The school has a strong sense of mission and purpose as a Catholic school and seeks to lead and inspire the community it serves. Parental involvement is increasing and the school has well considered plans to make this even better. Communication with the outside world is very good and the website of the school is being well used to share information. Links with other schools and the Diocese at every level are very close and seen to be useful in helping the school move forward in the future. The partnership work of the school is deservedly rated as outstanding.

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

Grade I*

The headteacher has been involved with the school for a very long time. Her passion and commitment to develop the Catholic life of the school is evident from the moment one steps over the threshold of the school. She has a clear vision and knows where she wants the school to go. It is not a one person single vision because she has developed a very good and supportive team around her including an extremely good religious education subject leader and has also conducted good

succession planning. Governors also have a clear vision going forward and are honest and reflective about their roles and responsibilities. All teachers including the 30% non-Catholic staff are being very well supported and the in-service training has clearly worked well because the quality of teaching in the school is so very good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and her staff in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.

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

- The current prayer corners and display around the school need to be developed much more to reflect better the high standards of work evident in religious education.
- Review the timetables as soon as practicable in some classes to ensure lessons are timetabled effectively and are of the right duration.
- Develop some long term sustainable charity links overseas that pupils can see the long term impact of their kindness and respect for others as global citizens of the future.