

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

St Robert Southwell

Slough Lane, Kingsbury, Brent. NW9 8YD

Date of inspection: 21 May 2015



A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of religious education in the school is good. The wide and varied curriculum, which is clearly matched to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, engages all pupils actively in their learning. Pupils have a secure knowledge of their Catholic faith and their religious literacy is well developed. Teaching is effective where pupils, including those with significant additional needs, make good progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the quality of religious education regularly and systematically. Their effective performance management procedures empower those involved in the teaching of religious education to be supported and guided as necessary. This includes how they receive support, guidance and challenge from the active and committed governing body. Religious education is monitored, with the agreed understanding of the levels of attainment, as the driving force for ongoing progress and improvement in religious literacy, across all phases in the school. Effective planning includes opportunities for reflection and appropriate deployment of resource materials, including Bibles for all pupils, the use of ICT, school research opportunities, and home based projects, in partnership with the parents.

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 Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The school provides highly effective opportunities for all pupils and staff to flourish in their Catholic faith and spiritual development. The purposeful engagement with the Common Good is rooted in the Church's social teaching. Pupils are confident and highly articulate. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils have been guided and nurtured to develop their personal, social, moral, cultural and spiritual needs. They can confidently express and explain the theological principles which underpin the social justice. This was evident from lesson observations, scrutiny of work in books and discussions with pupils, including the 'Pupil Chaplains'. The sacramental life of the school is paramount including how the place of prayer and liturgy is central to every aspect of the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic and ecclesial dimension of the school, including its effective partnerships with the range of diocesan advisors and officers. The pro-active governing body is highly appreciative of the well developed partnerships with parents and the parish community. This is accurately reflected and portrayed in the effective self-evaluation and the clear strategic priorities identified for on-going improvement and development.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation throughout the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited 14 lessons and two assemblies, and carried out seven interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents, through responses to questionnaires, discussions about the participation of the 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 St. Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School, Kingsbury, 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

Mrs. Tina Cleugh	Lead Inspector
Mrs. Rose Marie Sorohan	Associate Inspector
Mrs Evelyn Ward	Shadow Lead Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a two form entry in the LA of Brent within Fryent Ward and the locality of Kingsbury. The school serves the parishes of St. Sebastian and St. Pancras, Kingsbury. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 92 %. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 7% and from other Faiths 1%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 87%.

There are 450 pupils on roll, with 13 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHC). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. 10% (44) pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	3043506
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Headteacher:	Miss Honor Beck
Chair of Governors:	Mr. Peter Manning

Date of previous inspection:	30 March 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	Good (2)

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</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 school has reviewed the leadership and management system to develop the teaching and learning strategies for more effective outcomes for all pupils. They have invested generously in the range of resources, including access to Bibles for all pupils, and the enhancement of the site and outdoor learning areas. Their new Chapel and outdoor Prayer Garden are prayerful areas for all in the community to access. The headteacher and deputy headteacher oversee the effectiveness of religious education across the school, in partnership with the leader of religious education and designated governor for religious education.

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

Grade 2

The school provides a creative and varied curriculum, which is well resourced across the phases, including quality outdoor learning opportunities. It fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The school uses The Way, the Truth and the Life programme, which is supplemented through other creative resources and effective links throughout the liturgical cycle, including ICT for research and their recently introduced 'Caritas in Action' programme. They use external professionals to guide and support their ongoing continuing professional development programme for both teachers and support staff. Pupils are motivated and engaged in their learning. They enjoy their religious education lessons. The influence and contribution of religious education to the Catholic life of the school enhances the learning environment in and around the public and outdoor areas. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, in partnership with the designated governor for religious education, guide and support the leader of religious education.

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

Grade 2

The achievement of all pupils, including those with additional needs is good overall. The electronic tracking system provides evidence that good, and in certain cases, rapid progress is made in religious education. The school benefits well from its links with the deanery and diocesan moderation networks in assessing attainment in religious education, on a termly basis. Work is assessed against the Agreed Understandings in the Levels of Attainment in religious education, in accordance with the Curriculum Directory. The moderated samples indicate the robustness of the process which is shared through deanery and diocesan networks. The school has identified its priority to continue developing the confidence of all teachers across the phases, in effective moderation. All pupils demonstrate motivation and enthusiasm in their learning. They are pleased to discuss their learning and how they are making links, including the use of Scripture. There is evidence of progress through the attainment levels in religious education across the phases, with some excellent examples at the end of key stage two. There is evidence of challenge in lessons, particularly in upper key stage two, where key planned questioning stretches and engages pupils to develop a deeper understanding and response, including relevant references to Scripture.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

Teaching is good overall. This is evident from the triangulation of the evidence base, including observations in class, scrutiny of the work in the books and pupil voice. Pupils make good progress which is measured and assessed regularly. Where teaching was effective, pupils were challenged through high expectations, effective questioning and creative learning opportunities. An example of this was the 'code cracking' experience to access relevant scripture passages in an upper key stage two lesson. The ongoing electronic tracking and effective assessment procedures are good strategies for identifying areas of learning in religious education, moving pupils' learning forward. This includes regular oral and written feedback, which was described by pupils as, 'how my teacher helps me to learn.' The range of 'creative homework projects' includes, for example, their 'avourite Saint who has Influenced their Lives'; their 'Pentecostal Mobiles and Easter Gardens.' These methods are used by the school to engage parental involvement in the learning in religious education. This is effective and supports the liturgical cycle links, whilst contributing to the strong home school links which parents described as, 'enhancing the pupils' motivation to learn'.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The leadership and management of religious education is driven by the determination of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, which is good overall. They ensure effective provision is in place across all aspects of the religious education programme. Their drive to continue to implement strong systems and procedures includes their appraisal process. Their expectation for high quality provision in religious education for all pupils is impacting on the improvements in the quality of teaching, which is enhancing learning across the school. This gives religious education its due status, evident from the discussion with the governors and the regular references in the minutes of the termly meetings. The self evaluation has accurately identified their continued priorities for ongoing improvement in providing effective religious education for the pupils, to deepen their knowledge and skills. The leadership actively supports all staff in their professional development, with a clear agenda to sustain a shared focus and vision for excellence. This includes specific whole school agreed performance management objectives for the development of religious education and is reflected in the school improvement plan.

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

- The school has recognised the need to further develop the understanding and ownership by the pupils of their targets to improve their levels of attainment in religious education
- Through the review and evaluation of their working systems, the school has identified the need to ensure that the 'next steps' in marking are challenging pupils to respond to the higher levels of learning in religious education

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?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have effectively reviewed the leadership and management structure, including the recent appointment of a designated leader for the Catholic life of the school.

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

Grade 1

The very high status given to religious education is evident in the resources, including the outdoor and indoor stimulating environment of the school. The corridor areas and doors of each room carry specific scripture passages in high quality frames. This reminds all members of the school community of the distinctive nature of this Catholic school. The Chair of Governors referred to these framed passages as 'giving our children a real focus in belonging to a Catholic school.' Their newly built chapel, the outside prayer garden dedicated to Our Blessed Lady, the stained glass window painted by the pupils from the design by one of their support assistants, are hallmarks of the high status given to the Catholic life of the school. A child referred to the chapel as 'our Holy Ground.' The governing body is most generous in its commitment to ongoing refurbishment and development of the site, including the newly opened block of classrooms and hall and their plan annually for upgrading the site in general. The school fully meets the 10% requirements with in fact an 11% timetabled provision for religious education, allowing extra time for completion of work and personal assessment opportunities for pupils.

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

Grade 1

The experiences of prayer, worship and spiritual development offered to the pupils and members of the whole school community is outstanding. Pupils are articulate and confident and described to the inspectors how opportunities are planned for prayer and worship, which is woven through the daily life in the school. The sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are planned through the seasons, including Advent and Lent. Weekly attendance at the parish Mass is welcomed by the parishioners. The excellent partnership with the parish includes the regular and active involvement of the Parish Priest. The Pupil Chaplains led prayer with the inspectors before and at the end of their interview with them. Spontaneous opportunities for prayer are encouraged and evident in all areas of the school, including the Prayer Gardens and the class prayer areas. Other faiths, for example Judaism and Hinduism, are explored utilising the expertise of current staff members and planned visits to the Synagogue and the Hindu Temple. These activities bring these other faith experiences and celebrations more alive and in context for pupils, according to their age and ability levels. Parents paid particular tribute to how they are included in the Catholic prayer life, for example reciting the Rosary, led by the Pupil Chaplains, during October, and attendance at assemblies led by year groups. The school prayer is well known to pupils, as is their mission statement. St. Robert Southwell, their patron, is a model example to pupils, who described his courage and fortitude in his martyrdom and sacrifice for his faith, 'as a guide to everyone'. Research into their familiar saints as well as their patron is linked to their creative homework activities. Examples of these are displayed proudly in various public areas of the school. The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is

well enhanced with many opportunities available for pupils to reflect quietly and in reverence, which is worthy of note.

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

Grade 1

The outstanding Catholic life of the school ensures that pupils fully understand and appreciate their role in the Church, to recognise and respect the needs and plight of those locally, nationally and globally, who suffer poverty and injustice. Pupil Chaplains are able to reflect, using examples from scripture, on their role and responsibility 'as stewards and servants.' They explained this as their response to the call from Pope Francis, to 'love your neighbour.' During the inspection there was first hand evidence of their exploration of the 'persecuted Christians,' through history and currently in our world today; pupils are growing in a mature and thought provoking response to the call to human flourishing. They are eager to share their understanding of how the church's call to social justice, including events within their immediate and wider community networks, are influenced by responses and actions to support others in need, as integral to their role as Christians today. Pupils are benefiting from the recently introduced 'Caritas in Action' programme, where older pupils were observed for example discussing the need to learn to take responsibility in relation to the story of Cain and Abel and other links to Scripture. Pupils across the age range raise funds for a variety of charities including secular ones; these donations include 'Mary's Meals, CAFOD, Catholic Children's Society and MacMillan Cancer, as a mere example. The funding is evident through the acknowledgements from a range of agencies in appreciation of the school's generosity. They are displayed with great pride in the hall. Pupils were animated in outlining their involvement in these events and how proud they are of their role in supporting others. Parents highly value the way the school develops the spiritual and faith life of their children. They spoke eloquently of the different opportunities for planned and spontaneous prayer and sacramental events. Moral development, in particular behaviour and attitudes across the school from even the youngest pupils, is exemplary. They are courteous, polite and welcoming. Respect and value of and for each other, through their excellent relationships, is outstanding

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

The extremely strong triple partnership between parents, school and the parish community has been described by parents who met with the inspectors as, 'amazing and brilliant.' They hold the headteacher in high esteem and described her as, 'an outstanding headteacher for all of us.' The headteacher has described the full range of strategies to engage parents, which is ongoing. These strategies, such as events including 'coffee mornings or afternoons,' are fully appreciated by the parents who met with the inspectors. The governing body outlined their valuable links with and through the ecclesial family of the diocese. They fully appreciate the various aspects of the advisory guidance and the more formal training opportunities received. The new foundation governor appreciates the range of training opportunities, and the experienced governor, the guidance through the various changes to the admission arrangements from the diocese. They fully appreciate the need for ongoing scrutiny of the school and the identified priorities for improvement. The governors explained to the inspectors how they have a very clear understanding of their role and that the Catholic ethos 'underpins all of their actions' and their ongoing plans to sustain their excellent practice. The excellent links with the parish community, including the active role of the parish priest

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in the day to day and liturgical life of the school, is evident in the range of portfolio and displayed photographic evidence in classes and the public areas of the school. Parents acknowledged how the school holds the parish links as central to their mission in developing highly effective partnerships across the school, home and parish.

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

Grade 1

The leadership and management of the school effectively led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, is outstanding. It demonstrates the dynamic vision, which empowers this Catholic school to continue to thrive. Their active guidance and support to the newly appointed leader for the Catholic life of the school includes their strategic evaluation for continued improvement and development. The coherent and accurate self-evaluation, particularly the way they identified their next priorities to continually improve, is both relevant to the impact on the current situation and to the clearly defined actions for the next stage of development across the school. This includes planned and effective use of the indoor and outdoor prayer areas. The governing body is actively and efficiently supporting and challenging the leadership at all levels in all its strategic matters. They are the driving force, with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and parish priest, to the school's commitment and dedication to their pupils' spiritual growth and development. Their purposeful programme of prayer, worship and spiritual renewal for both staff and pupils, permeates the planned activities throughout the liturgical cycle, for the full participation of all in the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example. They have a clear understanding of how they can support the development and 'discipleship for life' of all in the school community.

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

- All pupils, including the Pupil Chaplains, to take ownership of planning and delivery of the liturgy and worship across the school.