

# St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School

Slough Lane, Kingsbury, London NW9 8YD

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 5 March 2020



## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The rich curriculum fully delivers all the themes of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. In teaching these curriculum materials, there is a creative and engaging approach using strategies which stimulate the imagination.
- Pupils achieve very well in religious education. They are confident and enthusiastic learners, actively participating in lessons.
- Religious literacy is a key element. Pupils speak confidently about religious education topics and issues, which is clearly the result of the strong emphasis placed on specialist vocabulary seen across the school. Pupils' books demonstrate pride in religious education and contain a variety of challenging tasks and exercises.
- Teaching is highly creative and engaging. It stimulates pupils in their learning and develops their curiosity through song, drama, art and media. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers share and develop knowledge with passion, creativity and confidence to enhance pupils learning.
- Pupil behaviour in lessons is very good. There is a good pace in most lessons which enables pupils to make outstanding progress.
- The leadership and management of the school is outstandingly effective in promoting religious education. The governing body takes a very deep interest in developing the vision for religious education. The approach of school leaders encourages staff to gain new ideas and implement approaches from deanery and diocesan meetings.

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

- The previous inspection proposed that all pupils, including the pupil chaplains, should take ownership of planning and delivery of the liturgy and worship across the school. The school has fully met this proposed improvement.
- At St Robert Southwell, religious education is at the heart of the curriculum. It is the core subject which underpins the whole of the pupils' education.
- A particular characteristic of the school is the special relationship it has built with St Dominic's Sixth Form College, enabling pupils to visit a Catholic centre of learning and witness young Catholic adults in a further stage of education.
- Worship and prayer are central to the life of all at St Robert Southwell. The liturgical year is reflected throughout the school and opportunities are given to pupils, staff and families to pray together as a community. Pupils plan and lead their own acts of worship.
- Pupils are given many opportunities for 'human flourishing'. They take on leadership tasks with pride and earnestness.
- There is an outstanding partnership between St Robert Southwell school and its parents, the parish and the diocese. The school makes particular efforts to ensure parents and family are welcome at various liturgical and seasonal events.
- The governing body are proactive in providing encouragement to enhance initiatives that bear witness to the teaching of Jesus.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspection identified two areas for improvement, firstly to further develop the understanding and ownership by the pupils of their targets and so improve their levels of attainment in religious education (RE); and secondly the need to ensure that the 'next steps' in marking are challenging pupils to respond to the higher levels of learning in religious education. After examining a selection of pupils' books from all classes and talking with the pupils, inspectors concluded that the school has fully achieved these improvements.

### The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The school uses a commercial RE teaching scheme which is structured and closely linked to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). The school incorporates further content from diocesan based materials as well as lessons from Cafod and Caritas. This rich teaching base fully delivers all the themes of the RECD. In delivering these resources, teachers adopt a creative and engaging approach using strategies which stimulate the imagination. An example seen was concerned with whose job in the school is it to do a variety of tasks, including fixing things, talking to the press and picking up rubbish. After a lively discussion, the similar question was transferred to Jesus and the disciples which led to further constructive discussion about what it meant to be 'following Jesus'. Pupils are familiar with scripture and each classroom in the upper school has sets of Bibles for all the pupils. There is a focus on embedding core vocabulary resulting in a high level of religious literacy. Their knowledge and understanding is enhanced by regular dialogue with the parish priest during his visits. There is age appropriate teaching about other faiths, including Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Staff and pupils from other faiths are encouraged to share their understanding in these teaching moments and classes.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupils achieve very well in religious education. They are confident and enthusiastic learners, actively participating in lessons. Progress is sustained throughout the key stages despite the pupils having low starting points on entry. During their time in Nursery and Reception, the pupils are settled into RE lessons and gain confidence to talk confidently about Jesus, his family and his love for us. They move from below age related expectations to achieving age related expectations by the end of Reception. Religious literacy is a key element. Pupils speak confidently about RE topics and issues. This is clearly the result of the strong emphasis placed on RE vocabulary seen in all lessons and displayed in classrooms. Pupils' books demonstrate pride in RE and contain a variety of creative tasks and challenges suitable for further thought and development. The emphasis on writing which is focused on unceasingly during Key Stage 1 ensures the pupils are able to speak and write with fluency on religious education topics. The school excels in bringing pupils with complex needs and language difficulties up to the level of the majority of the class, as far as possible.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching is highly creative and engaging. It engages pupils in their learning and develops their curiosity through song, drama, art and media. The teaching is never less than good and in places it is outstanding. Pupils make rapid and sustained progress, evidenced in books from a relatively low starting point upon entry. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers share and develop knowledge with passion, creativity and confidence to enhance pupils learning. Teachers use questioning to check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson. In some lessons, mini plenaries were used to carry this out. However, this needs to be developed to ensure open questioning is also used to further extend learning. 'Next step' marking is evident; it aids pupil progress and helps pupils

know their own areas of development. Highly engaging and creative and regular RE homework contributes well to pupils learning. Teachers plan for, and use a range of resources well, to support and enhance pupils' learning. They effectively deploy support staff to ensure all pupils make progress, echoed by parents who stated how much the children count on the staff. Teachers relate the set tasks to achieving the lesson objectives but in some instances there could have been a closer link between the task and the objective. Pupil behaviour in lessons is very good and there is a good pace in most lessons which enables pupils to make outstanding progress.

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

The leadership and management of the school is outstandingly effective in promoting religious education. The governing body takes a very deep interest in both developing the vision for religious education and works with the senior leadership team regarding its direction and content. This results in a very effective focus on the content and improvement of the pupils' achievement in religious education. Pupils, teachers and parents all confirmed to the inspectors how firmly religious education is at the core of the curriculum in St Robert Southwell. The monitoring and self-assessment procedures with respect to the staff ensures that both continual professional development and resources provision are well kept at the forefront of the regular reviews. The leadership team, and especially the assistant head with responsibility for RE and Catholic Life, are knowledgeable and innovative, inspiring the teachers to be thorough and creative in their RE teaching. Performance management includes targets for RE and there is regular feedback to the governors on progress in RE outcomes. The style of leadership encourages staff to gain new ideas and approaches from deanery and diocesan meetings. The input of the RE advisor is appreciated and incorporated into school planning and review. It is noticeable that such a high number of staff have attained the CCRS and there are two with degrees in theology and Catholic teaching.

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

- Continue to further develop the quality of questioning, in particular 'The Big Questions' and the more challenging questions.
- Look to ensuring that the set tasks facilitate the achievement of the learning objectives.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspection proposed that all pupils, including the pupil chaplains, take ownership of planning and delivery of the liturgy and worship across the school. After talking with the pupil chaplains about their planning of prayer and worship and being present at a number of collective worship sessions in the course of the inspection, the school has fully met this proposed improvement. Other areas of improvement since the last inspection include the introduction of weekly written RE homework, increased focus on religious vocabulary, and the strengthening of appropriate links between subjects, e.g. the Common Good and geography. An example of this is the 'One Child Foundation' in Sri Lanka which the school supports and it is an aid to the pupils to improve their understanding of faith in action.

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

is outstanding

At St Robert Southwell, religious education is at the heart of the curriculum. It is the core subject informing the pupils' education. The witness and teaching of Jesus Christ informs the relationships, the values and moral teaching within the school. The ethos of the school evidently reflects its Christian basis and this is reinforced with an annual study day on the ethos of the Catholic school. The budget and resource allocation serve this priority in when decision making in the school, both strategically by the governors and in the day to day running by the head and staff. The school's website, which provides information about a wide area of the school's activities, indicates clearly the importance of the Catholic ethos. A particular characteristic of the school is the special relationship it has built with St Dominic's Sixth Form College, enabling pupils to visit a Catholic centre of learning and witness young Catholic adults in a further stage of education. The school devotes at least 10% of classroom curriculum time to religious education, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are central to the life of all at St Robert Southwell. The liturgical year is reflected throughout the school and opportunities are given to pupils, staff and families to pray together as a community. The school offers time for daily prayer and reflection. It has developed special places of prayer and places for worship. Throughout the year the school ensures that pupils are able to attend Mass within the school but also provides opportunities for pupils to experience Mass at the local church. Such opportunities for the celebration of the Eucharist and Sacrament of Reconciliation demonstrate the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic worshipping community. Pupils' engagement in liturgies and prayer is clearly evident. The chaplaincy team supports in the delivery of prayer in assemblies and leads prayer and worship with their link class. To further enhance this, all pupils in the school need to be aware of the chaplains' role outside of assembly. Pupils plan and lead their own acts of worship. The school supports and provides opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths, including visits to local places of worship. The RE coordinator has ensured prayer and worship is well resourced within the school for example, the rosary prayer bags. The school ensures that any Mass or liturgy is extended to the wider community, as seen on Ash Wednesday. Pupils' spiritual development continues to be a key focus for the leadership team, ensuring pupils are provided with opportunities for quiet reflection, sharing and discussion. There is a culture of evaluation of the opportunities offered, and through the RE coordinator's action plan, examples of how this is met were evidenced.

**The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –****is outstanding**

Pupils are given many opportunities of 'human flourishing'. They take on leadership tasks with pride and earnestness. A range of ways exist for pupils to demonstrate and celebrate their gifts and talents, e.g. chaplains, prefects, and buddies. Through the 'Caritas in Action', programme pupils are very aware of their call to serve and to promote equality and social justice. Pupils raise questions such as 'Why does the government not allow refugees into our country?' Pupils of all age groups experience this call. The school supports a range of charities, locally, nationally and internationally, for example the 'One Child Foundation' in Sri Lanka, to which they have a personal link. The school creatively links subjects, for instance, RE and geography, working in a cross-curricular way with respect to their charities.

**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**

There is an outstanding partnership between St Robert Southwell school and its parents, the parish and the diocese. The school engages with its parents on a variety of fronts, in particular in the way it arranges morning arrival and afternoon departure of the pupils. The school website is family friendly and there are other social media links with the parents. The school makes particular efforts to ensure parents and families are welcome at various liturgical and seasonal events. The parents told the inspection team, both through the meeting them during the inspection and through the questionnaire, just how much they appreciate the very good partnership with the school. Some of the staff are also catechists in the parish and there is close partnership with the parish. The parish priest finds the school is very supportive in the various joint initiatives. The school regards close cooperation with the diocese as a priority and attends all appropriate meetings and conferences. The visits of the RE advisers over the years have been welcomed and proved instrumental in helping the school develop and improve the provision of religious education and its Catholic life.

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

The leadership and management are outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. There is a clear vision for the Catholic nature of the school which is demonstrated by the leadership team of the school in all it does. The governing body are proactive in providing encouragement to enhance initiatives that bear witness to the teaching of Jesus. The displays in the classrooms and corridors, the articulation of the pupils about what following Jesus means, the allocation of resources, all evidenced this vision. The staff are supportive and involved and new staff are well inducted into the Catholic ethos. The close links with the parish and the involvement of the parish priest all serve to promote the Catholic life of the school.

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

- Continue to develop further approaches to facilitating the spiritual growth of the pupils.

## Information about our school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic voluntary aided school in the LA of Brent and the locality of Kingsbury.
- The school serves the parish of St Sebastian & St Pancras, Hay Lane, Kingsbury.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 80%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 16% and from other faiths is 3%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 88%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 8 with CCRS and 2 with Theology as a main degree subject.
- There are 12% pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 10 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 the national average
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above the national average
- A well below average number of families claim free school meals
- 7% (28) pupils are in receipt of Pupil Premium

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	3043506
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101543
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 -11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	464 total
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing board
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Manning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Honor Beck
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8204 6148
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.robsouth.org">www.robsouth.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@robsouth.brent.sch.uk">admin@robsouth.brent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 May 2015
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom Religious education</b>	Good
<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 16 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 assembly 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, scrutiny 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.

Deacon Anthony Clark

Lead Inspector

Mrs Margaret Hanley

Associate Inspector

Ms Aisling Meehan

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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