

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Croxley View, Watford, Herts WD18 6BW

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 16 November 2017



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- Religious education is clearly at the heart of this school and this is reflected in the importance it is given within the school and by all members of the community.
- The curriculum engages pupils in their learning and is well supplemented by teaching from the Catholic tradition.
- The leadership team provides strong support for staff and pupils in religious education.
- Teaching is well structured and monitored to make sure that there is consistency across all key stages.
- Teaching engages all pupils, supporting those that need it and ensures that pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
- Religious education reflects the Catholic life of the school, following the liturgical year and supporting Catholic Social Teaching.
- Standards are regularly monitored across the school, deanery and diocese.
- Children show excellent behaviour in lessons and have strong relationships with each other and with the staff

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Sometimes, teachers focus too much on the literacy aspects of a task, rather than the religious education content.
- Marking does not point pupils towards their next steps in learning often enough.
- Tasks given to the children are sometimes limiting and do not always give them the opportunity to make as much progress as they possibly could.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- A parent says 'St Anthony's is a wonderful school whose mission statement underpins all areas of school life.'
- An established programme of school retreats for all ages takes children out of the school and into other environments to reflect on their own faith journeys.
- The Catholic identity of the school is evident in the high number and high quality of artefacts and displays around the school building.
- New staff and staff from other faith traditions are supported by well-planned induction programmes.
- The expansion of the school has been handled sensitively in order to maintain the strong ethos of the school.
- The school facilities are well maintained, showing that the community respects and values the buildings. The school benefits from sacred spaces such as the chapel and outside prayer areas.
- The children take an active role in supporting charities, both local and national and make suggestions as to how they can do this.
- There are strong links with the parish, with the newly appointed priest already developing positive relationships with the children in the school.
- Parents clearly value all that the school does for the children.
- The school benefits from a committed governing body who are actively involved in many aspects of school improvement and school life.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, the school has researched different schemes of work and chosen one of them to follow. This has now been in place for over four years and is used well by the staff. The school has developed a good system of half termly staff development sessions to support the teachers in the delivery of each topic. The school has a programme of monitoring in place which ensures that the quality of teaching and learning in religious education remains high.

The content of classroom religious education is good

Following the last inspection, the school researched and replaced its existing scheme of work. The religious education coordinator has mapped new scheme to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) to ensure that it is fully covered. Pupils are aware of the four areas of study and teachers make these explicit in their planning and teaching. In addition to the scheme of work, the school also uses its own resources to teach pupils about the Rosary (Year 4) and the Stations of the Cross (Year 5) in detail. These topics form part of the extensive programme of retreats run for the children and also contribute to many of the displays around the school. The school is well resourced for the teaching of religious education (RE). Other faiths are taught as part of the scheme of work and their delivery is enhanced by members of staff who belong to that faith and by trips to Stanmore Mosque and Northwood Synagogue.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

The achievement of pupils in religious education is good. Pupils make expected progress across the school and attainment is generally in line with that of other core subjects. The school makes sure that it carries out moderation at school, local and diocesan level in order to make sure that judgements are secure. Progress is tracked across Key Stage 1 and 2 and work has now started to include Early Years Foundation Stage children in this as well. Throughout the school, pupils display good religious literacy. Children in Early Years were able to name characters from the story of the Annunciation, while pupils higher up the school could refer to the Beatitudes to back up an answer. All the pupils displayed good behaviour throughout the lessons and showed good relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils were all confident in the routines of the classrooms and were confident in asking for help. The RE books have the Levels of Attainment in them in order to help the children see what they have achieved in their work and lessons make explicit which area of the RECD is being covered. Tasks seen in religious education books were often literacy based; more opportunities to explore religious learning through drama, music, art and other interpretive approaches could allow more pupils to achieve at a higher level.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is good, leading to pupils achieving well over their time at St Anthony's. Teachers displayed strong subject knowledge and have developed strong relationships with the children. One child said of the teachers, 'They are always there to support and inspire us'. There is a good level of challenge in most lessons and the children are supported or extended when they need to be. In some lessons, teachers spent too long talking which meant that children could not make as much progress as they otherwise could have done. Staff questioned children well, but need to ask more open questions and promote discussions between the pupils in order to extend their understanding more fully and give them every opportunity to make rapid progress. Homework is used to support the learning in class and is a good link between home and school. Staff mark books regularly and the work in them is valued and affirmed. In the best cases, this marking challenges the children to think more deeply

about their work or points them towards the next step in their learning. In some books, the marking refers more to the presentation or language skills than the religious education content.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

The subject leader of religious education, along with the head, provides strong leadership of religious education with a clear vision which is shared by all the staff and which places RE at the heart of the curriculum. There is a thorough programme of monitoring in place which supports staff in the delivery of classroom religious education, identifying those that might need additional support or who are new to the school. It ensures that staff are developed to deliver the curriculum with in-house continuing professional development and with the training available from the diocese. There is a good relationship with other schools in the deanery, both primary and secondary and the school takes part in regular cross school and cross phase moderation in order to validate their own judgements.

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

- Continue to further improve the quality of teaching through continuing professional development, feedback from senior leaders and demonstration lessons from outstanding colleagues and by visiting other schools.
- To introduce more variety and open-ended questions and tasks in RE lessons to enhance the learning experiences for the pupils.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The fact that, since the last inspection, the school has been able to establish two outdoor prayer areas for the children, despite the ongoing expansion of the school, is a testament to the importance the school puts on prayer and worship. Both areas, one in the Early Years' Garden and the other available for other pupils are age appropriate, used, and valued by staff and pupils. The school devotes half a term each year to look at Catholic Social Teaching using materials produced by Caritas Westminster and Cafod and this links with their status as a Fairtrade School.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is at the heart of all that this school does and is articulated eloquently by school leaders, staff and pupils. A generous budget, which sometimes exceeds that for other core subjects, means that resources are of a high quality and are on display around the school. The whole Early Years Foundation Stage had similar images of St Anthony on display, making their patron saint familiar to children from the start of their time at the school. Great care has been taken to ensure that the ethos of the school has not been affected by the recent expansion and the new spaces created have been used to give more prominence to displays reflecting the school retreats. Staff receive in-house professional development to develop their teaching of RE and also attend diocesan training. Governors play an important part in monitoring that RE remains a priority.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school and pupils and staff have excellent opportunities to participate in the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation at key times in the liturgical year. The innovative use of class retreats offers meaningful opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of Catholic traditions of prayer and worship, such as The Rosary and Stations of the Cross and reflect the liturgical year with the making of Advent wreaths. Staff and pupils take full advantage of the attractive chapel and outdoor prayer areas to engage in both private and class prayer and reflection. Pupils' spirituality is very well developed as a result. From the earliest years, the children's liturgical formation is fostered and teachers plan opportunities to make this meaningful and relevant to the pupils. In a Reception class, the children spontaneously started singing the songs from their Christmas play as they made collages of the Angel Gabriel. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the regular opportunities the school offers them to plan and lead prayer and worship.

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

is outstanding

The school ensures that the widest range of pupils' talents and gifts are recognised, valued and celebrated on a regular basis and in a variety of ways. Following the previous inspection, it has worked hard to ensure that pupils understand the underlying theology of the call to 'human flourishing' and the Church's call to action for justice. In discussions, pupils expressed this confidently; one said, 'In the Bible, Jesus helped people and he asked us to do the same, so we can follow in his footsteps.' They were also able to explain the ethics of the marketplace, in an age-appropriate way, by talking about why they are a Fairtrade school. Money is raised regularly for local, national and international charity organisations and pupils take an active part in the decisions

about which charity to choose, and how the money will be raised. The school council had organised a 'Pyjama Day' in aid of Children in Need the day before the inspection and pupils were still full of enthusiasm following the event. The Year 6 retreat which looked at leadership also gave the pupils the opportunity to make 'welcome' cards for the new children, building on the positive relationships evident throughout the school.

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

Parent partnership is a key strength of the school. It works closely with parents to develop a shared understanding of the school's vision for Catholic education. Parents are welcomed to school events and this is greatly appreciated by parents. One wrote eloquently regarding this, '(the school's) ethos is evident upon arrival ... (pupils) leave St Anthony's with the Gospel values needed to understand their faith, be tolerant of others and with an awareness of the needs of others...' The recently appointed school chaplain is already working with the school to plan how to further extend and strengthen the existing very good links that exist with the parish community. By placing some of the school retreats in the parish churches, the school directly links its work with that of the parishes. The school takes an active part in all deanery activities and makes excellent use of the services offered by the diocese to develop staff and carry forward their improvement agenda.

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

is outstanding

All school leaders, including the governors, show a deep commitment to the school's mission in Catholic education. The senior leadership team, in particular, works hard to ensure that the whole school community has access to rich and meaningful opportunities to experience a Catholic way of living. The school has ensured that the mission statement is regularly reviewed and accurately reflects its ethos as a Catholic school. Pupils are very familiar with the mission statement and can explain their understanding of it. New staff are well supported and all staff enjoy high quality professional development opportunities. The school actively promotes the Catholic Certificate Religious Studies among staff and, as a result, there are high numbers of staff who hold this certificate. Staff from other faiths are valued and invited to share their knowledge and expertise with pupils and colleagues during topics on other religions.

The whole school reflects the vision of the leadership team in the relationships displayed by all members of the community and in the respect and care they show for each other.

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

- Continue to ensure RE remains at the heart of this expanding school.
- Continue to work with parents and parish enabling them to support their children's learning and development.

Information about this school

- The school is currently expanding to a two form entry Catholic Primary and Nursery school in the locality of West Watford.
- The school serves the parishes of Holy Rood, Watford and St Bede's, Croxley Green.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 87%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 7 % 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 74 %.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is nine.
- There are 15 % of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 2 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 a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 29 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (7 %).

Department for Education Number	919/3428
Unique Reference Number	117495
Local Authority	Hertfordshire

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	437
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr David Callaghan
Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Wilson
Telephone number	01923 226987
Website	www.stanthonys.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@ stanthonys.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2013
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Very Good
The Catholic life of the school	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 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 Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Catherine McMahon	Lead Inspector
Mrs Helen Lines	Associate Inspector
Mrs Yvonne Rutherford	Associate Inspector

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