



Diocese of Westminster

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School
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DFE Number: 919/3428
URN Number: 117495

Headteacher: Mrs P. Wilson
Chair of Governors: Dr D. Callaghan

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

Date of inspection: 8th May 2013
Date of previous inspection: 6th December 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan
Associate Inspector: Mrs C. Doogan

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 seven lessons, attended two liturgies and carried out eight 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 St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Watford 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 one form entry with nursery in Watford in the local authority of Hertfordshire. It is currently expanding to become two form entry and a major building project is taking place. The school serves the parishes of Holy Rood in Watford and St Bede's in Croxley Green. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 1%.

There are 285 pupils on roll; one pupil is currently being assessed for 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 also well above average. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals.

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: 1

The overall effectiveness of curriculum religious education is very good and meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory which forms the basis for the programmes of study supported by the 'Year of Faith' units. The quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Pupils make very good progress through the challenge and expectations of their teachers. Effective structures are in place to ensure quality teaching and monitoring. Self-evaluation is accurate and indicates an excellent knowledge of the school and development areas for religious education. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and there are effective structures in place to support new members of staff. There is a strong commitment to on-going professional development to enable staff to improve and develop their teaching of religious education. The headteacher and deputy, who is also subject leader, give the subject 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 two areas for development in the last inspection report. These were: to implement the planned development of visits and visitors to enhance learning about other faiths; to continue to provide resources to support the teaching and learning of the new religious education scheme. The school has made an excellent response to both areas. There are now strong links with the local mosque and synagogue and a programme of visits has been implemented. In addition, appropriate artefacts have been purchased to support the teaching of Islam and Judaism. The religious education scheme of work is now supported by a wide range of resources including books, artefacts and IT resources.

To further improve classroom religious education the school should:

1. Continue to research a new scheme of work to support all teachers as they implement the revised Curriculum Directory.
2. Continue to maintain and further improve the quality of teaching to enable all teachers to reach the highest standard.

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

Grade 1

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 lesson planning. The school is using the 'Year of Faith' units which are cross referenced to the areas of the Curriculum Directory being covered. Staff are very well supported by the subject leader in their planning. She writes short term plans for each key stage which 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 much evidence of imaginative planning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.

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

Grade 1

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress in religious education are very good. Pupils enter the school below 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 good use of support staff particularly at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards meet and sometimes exceed diocesan expectations. Lessons observed provided evidence of very well motivated pupils who are actively engaged in their own learning. Pupils make very good progress and are encouraged to become independent learners who are able to develop their understanding of scripture and religious concepts. Workbooks and conversations with pupils provided evidence that pupils are attaining a good standard in knowledge and understanding of religion and are developing an ability to reflect on its meaning.

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

The quality of teaching is generally very good. Lessons observed across the school during the inspection gave evidence of high teacher expectations for all groups. Teachers generally demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a variety of strategies to engage the full range of ability. Five teachers hold the CCRS certificate or equivalent and two have degrees in theology. All teachers have good access to in-service training both in-house or provided by the diocese. They use time well and pupils are given opportunities to develop new skills and build on previous learning. Workbooks are very well presented; marking is positive and interactive, with targets set for further improvement to which pupils respond. Regular monitoring of teaching is in place followed by discussion and support as necessary. Good assessment procedures and support from the subject leader have enabled teachers to plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Parents are able to support their children's learning through homework tasks, invitations to liturgies, assemblies 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 are outstanding and have a positive impact on the life of the school. The experienced subject leader is very well supported by the headteacher and all staff. Together they ensure that clear vision and direction for religious education is shared by the whole school community. The mission statement, 'We grow and learn with Jesus' is well known by pupils and central to all that is done. 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 is detailed and comprehensive. Governors are well informed and actively involved in the life of the school. They are familiar with current developments in religious education and share a vision of Catholic education which draws on Church philosophy and teaching. The priest from Holy Rood parish visits frequently to prepare Eucharistic celebrations and liaise with teachers and pupils.

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: 1*

The school is most effective in developing pupils' experience in the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The leadership and vision of the headteacher and subject leader 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 has a strong commitment to the school's vision of itself as a Catholic community. Very 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 there have been several innovations which have enhanced the Catholic life of the school. These include: a Religious Education club run by the RE coordinator which meets to organise displays in school and the parish of Holy Rood. Pupils also plan and organise liturgies and assemblies as well as taking leading roles during the school celebrations of Mass; a redecorated chapel which is available for class worship and older pupils at lunchtimes; the increased involvement of the link governor who supports retreat days, visits and meetings. Pupils have been given increased opportunities for reflection and meditation as well as more occasions where they can contribute to school and classroom liturgies. All staff have been well supported as the school implements the new diocesan Framework and requirements of the Curriculum Directory.

To further develop the Catholic life of the school: the proposed outdoor prayer area should be established and pupils given opportunities to discuss the ethics of the market place and moral issues in society.

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

Grade 1*

Religious education receives 10% of curriculum time and has a similar budget to other core subjects. Resources are very good and teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting younger pupils. There is an excellent learning environment through attractive displays in classrooms and other areas of the school. Each classroom has a prominent prayer focus which includes children's work. The leadership team offer very 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 provide excellent support in reviewing and developing the place of religious education. The priest from the local parish who is also a governor liaises closely 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 outstanding. Pupils are given many opportunities for prayer, meditation and reflection within the Catholic tradition and several examples were seen during the inspection. Pupils are enabled to participate and contribute to a wide range of worship. The liturgical year forms the basis for many of the prayer and worship opportunities. During the inspection, a liturgy honouring Mary took place in the school chapel involving pupils in Year 3. They 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. Their spiritual development is nurtured through religious education which permeates the wider life of the school. The parental questionnaires indicated that parents were very positive about invitations to Masses, liturgies and other school celebrations and many included appreciative comments about the way their children were supported on their faith journey.

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

Grade 1

The school has a very good understanding of the importance of service and support for those in need. Pupils are given a very wide range of opportunities to support local and national charities including Cafod, Catholic Children's Society and Children in Need as well as raising funds to support a school in South Sudan. The Year 1 teacher is spending a year there, and emails pupils to inform them of children's lives in this new country. Pupils support the local care home and Year 6 have each adopted a resident as a pen pal with a view to learning more about their lives. Pupils visit the care home in small groups and have entertained residents in school as well as serving tea and singing carols at Christmas. Conversations with members of the school council and older pupils indicate that they are given many opportunities to support their school including assisting in the playground and helping younger pupils. Pupils are growing in their understanding that responding to the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. 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 local church to deepen their faith and understanding. The school works closely with parents and carers who are appreciative of all that is done to support their children. There are also very good links with the Diocese through participation in training offered through the Westminster Education Service, for both staff and governors. Senior staff attend diocesan conferences and have participated in deanery moderation sessions.

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

Grade 1*

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. Leadership is outstanding and the headteacher, subject leader, governors, and senior staff ensure that the Catholic life of the school is central to all its work. Pupils are given very 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 monitored, evaluated, and underpinned by the mission statement. Governors make a highly significant contribution and have a clear understanding of their role in safeguarding and promoting the Catholic life of the school.



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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 1
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 1
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*