

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## Christ the King Catholic Primary School

55 Tollington Park, London N4 3QW

Date of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016



### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

The effectiveness of the classroom religious education is outstanding. The content of religious education provides the foundation which enables pupils to make rapid progress; this is a significant strength of the school. Pupil achievement, attainment and progress overall are outstanding. The high standards are the result of very high teacher expectations. Pupils are confident in their use of religious concepts and terms, they demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. The quality of teaching is good with outstanding features. Inspectors agreed with the judgement of the school that the quality of the teaching is consistently good. Behaviour for learning is excellent and as a result the learning flourishes. The leadership and management of religious education are outstanding. The strategic overview and vision for classroom religious education are highly effective resulting in pupils being able to use and apply strong religious literacy to their everyday life and experience.

### 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 I**

It is evident to all that religious education is a subject that is at the heart of the school and its influence enhances the education that pupils receive. The experience of Catholic worship is outstanding. The school excels in the provision it makes for pupils to pray and reflect each day. The richness of, and importance placed upon, the Catholic tradition of worship results in pupils being involved, engaged and aware of their own spirituality. The commitment and contribution to the Common Good are outstanding. Pupils have many opportunities to serve those in need. The school's key relationships with parents, parishes, other Catholic schools and the Diocese are outstanding. The school leadership team have a clear understanding that as a diocesan school they not only actively participate in the services provided by the diocese but that the school also puts itself at the service of the diocese. The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The executive headteacher has high ambition for his school and instils in staff and pupils the desire to strive for excellence. The leadership team and the staff are excellent witnesses to the values of the school; the impact can be seen in the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the school. This is a thriving Catholic school.

## Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, executive headteacher, head of school, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited 12 lessons and one assembly, and carried out six 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 Christ the King Catholic Primary School, Islington 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

Mr Matthew Dell  
Mrs Amanda Crowley  
Mr James Stacey

Lead Inspector  
Associate Inspector  
Associate Inspector

## Description of School

This voluntary aided school is a two form entry in the LA of Islington. The school serves the parishes of St Mellitus, Tollington Park and St Gabriel, Archway. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 67%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 27% and from other Faiths 6%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 86%.

There are 371 pupils on roll. There are 17% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities, of whom nine have 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 well above average rate of families claiming free school meals. 274 of the pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

Telephone: 020 7272 5987  
e-mail address: admin@ctks.co.uk

DFE Number: 206 3633  
URN Number: 100450

Executive Headteacher: Mr John Lane  
Head of School: Miss Romy Hoster  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Althea Robinson-Fanus

Date of previous inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010  
Previous Inspection grades: Outstanding

**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?**

In the last inspection there were two issues for action identified: (i) to further increase the numbers of pupils achieving beyond the expected levels through the introduction of challenging individual targets in Religious Education; (ii) to develop Religious Education data analysis in order to monitor the progress of groups of pupils. Both of these issues have been successfully met. Since the last inspection classroom religious education has thrived due to many factors such as the continued strategy of developing teacher confidence in the use of assessment and the development of excellent schemes of work to support effective planning. The school has treated religious education as a core subject with the outcome that pupils make excellent progress in the subject.

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

#### **Grade I**

The content of the classroom religious education is outstanding. The religious education curriculum meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory in an exceptional way; it challenges pupils to develop rapid religious literacy and lays down very solid foundations for pupils to approach new learning. The programme that the school uses has led to a greater emphasis on the use of scripture, which in turn has led to creative and stimulating learning experiences for pupils. In a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils confidently used scripture to examine Catholic beliefs about the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There is a systematic programme of study which comprehensively covers all the strands and requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Each topic plan sets out the areas taught from Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ ensuring progression and depth of provision. The school's religious education curriculum materials have been shared with other schools; this in itself is testimony to the high quality resources that the school generates. The religious education curriculum is enriched through the many opportunities pupils have for liturgy and activities related to the Catholic life of the school, for example Stations of the Cross and Christmas Carol services. The classrooms and displays across the school provide an excellent environment for pupils to develop their own learning, for instances the focus area that encourages pupils to contribute to the 'big questions'. The content of religious education provides the foundation which enables pupils to make rapid progress; this is a significant strength of the school.

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

#### **Grade I**

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress overall are outstanding. The high standards are the result of very high teacher expectations. All groups of learners make excellent progress. Given the context of the school, with higher than average levels of deprivation, standards overall are outstanding. Attainment on entry is low compared to national averages and by the end of Key Stage 2 significantly large numbers of pupils exceed diocesan expectations. The progress pupils make is outstanding. The inspectors have a high level of confidence in the moderation of pupil work; both internal and external moderation is very precise and thus provides a secure basis to make accurate judgements about pupil progress. Data is used effectively by staff to inform planning. The agreed

understandings are used and embedded fully. Monitoring and assessment procedures are in place which measure attainment and progress effectively. Plans are put in place immediately where gaps are identified in pupil progress and there is a culture of high expectation. The system of using 'baskets' or 'suitcases', for pupils to identify the assessment strand, is an example of best practice that could be shared with other schools. Pupils are confident in their use of religious concepts and terms, they demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability. Pupils are regularly encouraged to deepen their religious understanding through extension and homework opportunities.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 2**

The quality of teaching is good with outstanding features. Inspectors agreed with the judgement of the school that the quality of the teaching is consistently good. There is capacity for further development in order to increase the percentage of outstanding teaching; this can be achieved by disseminating the existing expertise in the school and continuing to provide top quality in-service training for all staff. Sometimes teacher talk dominated at the expense of consolidating learning and occasionally the pace of a lesson was slowed by questioning that was less focused. Good learning opportunities were sometimes missed due to a lack of confidence in subject knowledge. Teachers regularly demonstrated that they had high expectations of pupil learning. In a Key Stage 1 lesson on baptism, pupils responded very well to targeted questioning that encouraged them to use religious vocabulary to relate their learning to their own experiences. In a Key Stage 2 lesson the teacher was effective in enabling pupils to make links to prior learning, in this case the parable of the prodigal son and to use this to enhance their understanding of the concept of reconciliation. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported and work is differentiated so that learners can achieve within their own ability and capacity and so become independent learners. Routines for learning ensure that behaviour for learning is excellent with the result that learning flourishes. Relationships between pupils and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. In an effective Key Stage 2 lesson on forgiveness the structure of the lesson enabled pupils to write at length about the development of the concept, referring to different sources: scripture and tradition. Marking is consistent and provides effective feedback for pupils to take the next step to improve.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade 1**

The leadership and management of religious education are outstanding. There is a very strong vision for religious education in which staff and pupils strive consistently for excellence. The head of school and assistant headteacher ensure that classroom religious education is given the highest priority. They are well supported by the governors and the executive headteacher in their work. The school has a rigorous professional development programme including the induction of new staff, especially those new to the teaching of classroom religious education. The head of school and assistant headteacher help to create resources that are used by other schools in the diocese. The subject leader leads a very successful deanery group who meet regularly and who also share best practice across the diocese. There are regular staff meetings to discuss and plan the delivery for effective teaching and learning in classroom religious education. Staff appraisal contains a target relating to the attainment and progress of pupils in religious education, this ensures that the subject has high status and that teachers are focused on improving outcomes for pupils. There is a coaching culture whereby individual members of staff are assisted in their development as excellent teachers. Targeted planning meetings with individual teachers ensures that issues are addressed so that pupil learning is supported. The subject leader for religious education rigorously monitors the teaching and learning of religious education through: lesson observations, book analysis, learning walks, pupil voice, parent questionnaires. This informs the self-evaluation process which is accurate and thorough, leading to action plans that stimulate excellent progress. The strategic overview and vision

for classroom religious education are highly effective resulting in pupils being able to use and apply their strong religious literacy to their everyday life and experience.

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

- Further increase the percentage of outstanding teaching by disseminating the existing expertise in the school.
- To continue to access top quality in-service training for all staff.

## **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?**

At the last inspection there were no issues identified for the Catholic life of the school. The school has continued to develop the Catholic life of the school in a number of ways, such as increasing the number of Catholic teachers so that there are now 86%. The school has taken a lead role in a number of partnerships and networks with other Catholic schools that further strengthen the Catholic life and ecclesial identity of the school. The prayer life of the school has been further developed by the creation of a chapel and through more opportunities for pupils to take an active role in the organisation of class worship, weekly class Masses and seasonal devotions.

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

#### **Grade I**

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding. The school is authentically fulfilling the Bishops' requirements for classroom religious education. Curriculum time is 10%. It is evident to all that religious education is a subject that is at the heart of the school and its influence enhances the education that pupils receive. The leadership team are fully committed to the subject and the governors equally value the high status that religious education has. Classroom religious education permeates through everything that happens in the school. The support that religious education receives is outstanding in terms of resources and budget. Staff are extremely well supported in their professional development for the teaching of religious education especially in the time given to support those who are newly qualified. The school is a beacon of outstanding practice in terms of the shared vision that the governing body, the leadership team and staff have for classroom religious education.

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

#### **Grade I**

The experience of Catholic worship is outstanding. The school excels in the provision it makes for pupils to pray and reflect each day. In their classrooms pupils regularly pray together, for example at the beginning and end of the school day, before lunch, and during collective acts of worship. Inspectors witnessed a palpable sense of joy as pupils gathered in song for class worship, the teacher skilfully created an atmosphere that fostered reverence and encouraged reflection of the season of Lent. In another class worship experience, pupils responded to the reflection saying "I liked the calm" and "it made me think about giving up something for Lent". The school has worked hard to provide staff with strong structures for prayer (gather, word, response, mission). The result is that staff are confident in facilitating prayer and pupils have outstanding opportunities to pray. Pupils have many opportunities to engage in the planning and preparation of acts of worship. Assemblies are very well planned and pupils enjoy taking part through singing and the said responses. In an assembly on Lent, pupils were given an excellent opportunity to reflect the previous day's liturgy (Ash Wednesday), they were led skilfully through scripture to examine ways that they could strengthen their relationship with God and their neighbour. The 'Wednesday Word' is sent home to families every week and it is effectively used as a focus for worship in classes and in assemblies.

The richness of, and importance placed upon, the Catholic tradition of worship results in pupils being involved, engaged and aware of their own spirituality. Pupils are encouraged and given opportunities to develop liturgical ministries e.g. altar serving, reading, music and hospitality. Pupils have excellent opportunities to attend Mass and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation where this is appropriate. Classes from Year 3 to Year 6 attend the weekly Wednesday parish Mass on a rota basis. There has been a lot of work in utilising the new chapel as a resource for the prayer life of community, this needs to be fully embedded. Special liturgical assemblies take place to celebrate key occasions such as the Feast of Christ the King. Music is a key strength of the school, hymns are regularly practised in singing assembly and used in whole school and class masses, the school choir is an excellent example to other pupils. The spiritual and moral development of learners is enhanced because of the prayer/worship/liturgy opportunities and experiences offered to the children.

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

### **Grade I**

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good are outstanding. Pupils have many opportunities to serve those in need. The school has built strong partnerships with a number of agencies that work for social justice in a variety of contexts; examples include the (local) SVP, Catholic Children's Society, The Passage, Shelter (national), Cafod and Mission Together (international). There are many opportunities for fundraising by pupils, staff and parents. Supporting such organisations allows the school community to see the values of the Gospel put into practice. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand what they are doing and why they are doing it, and explaining how their contribution makes a difference. As a result pupils are very secure about the theological rationale for Catholic schools to engage in corporal works of mercy. The pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds and their excellent behaviour and the quality of relationships with one another is a huge strength of the school. The school's week long celebration of the Christ the King Feast Day is an excellent example of how pupils' gifts and talents are valued. The school's shared expectations (be gentle, kind and helpful, look after property, have good manners, listen to people, work hard, be honest and tell an adult if you have a problem) are shared effectively so that pupils know and understand the expectations. The school ensures that pupils understand too that call to justice and a sense of service are essential parts of their Catholic identity.

## **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**

The school's key relationships with parents, parishes, other Catholic schools and the Diocese are outstanding. The annual parents' questionnaire revealed very high levels of support and trust in the school. Parents are regularly kept informed about the religious education curriculum and the 'Wednesday Word' is used to support families in their understanding of the liturgical year. There are strong links with the parishes with an excellent system for sharing school news in the parish newsletter and parish news in the school newsletter to parents. The school regularly uses the parish church for Mass. The parish priest is a school governor and is a regular visitor to the school. This facilitates excellent home-school-parish links. There is an opportunity to further develop the partnership with the two local parishes, especially in regard to the recent and planned changes in parish priests. Three very successful Catholic groups exist in the borough; the Islington Headteachers' Group, the Islington Religious Education Subject Leaders' Group and the Islington Inclusion Leaders' Network. In each of these groups teachers from the school play a lead role in encouraging authentic collaboration. There are excellent links between school staff and diocesan officers. The school shares their religious education resources with many other Catholic primary

schools in the diocese. Staff regularly participate in diocesan in-service ranging from induction to headteacher conferences. The school has taken part in diocesan events; for example for the Year of Mercy the school has developed a comprehensive programme to explore, deliver and deepen the school community's understanding of the Year of Mercy. In particular the 'mercy doors' throughout the school building are an example of excellent practice. The school leadership team have a clear understanding that as a diocesan school they not only actively participate in the services provided by the diocese but that the school also puts itself at the service of the diocese.

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

### **Grade I**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The executive headteacher has high ambition for his school and instils in staff and pupils the desire to strive for excellence. The head of school and the leadership team are very effective in supporting the executive headteacher; together they are passionate about promoting a school that is fully committed to the Church's mission in education. The leadership team and the staff are excellent witnesses to the values of the school; the impact can be seen in the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of pupils. There is a rigorous culture of monitoring, analysis and challenge that has led to a school development plan that clearly identifies priorities to further develop the Catholic life of the school and religious education. The school's self-evaluation form is a very accurate assessment of the strengths and areas for development for the school; inspectors concurred with all the judgements the school made about itself. The governors of the school make a significant contribution to ensuring the school is an outstanding Catholic school. The chair of governors has an excellent vision of the value of Catholic education and with a group of highly skilled governors, works very effectively with the leadership team in ensuring that there are high standards in religious education and that the Catholic life of the school is safeguarded and promoted. There are excellent systems in place to support the induction of new staff into the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement makes a significant contribution to the life of the school. The three strands of the mission statement, 'to live together in harmony, to grow and develop in Christ, to reflect God's love in all we do' are integral to the school's daily life. During the first week of the new school year, all classes review and reflect on the meaning of the school mission statement. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils used their familiarity with school's mission statement to make links to Catholic beliefs about forgiveness. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of their school's mission and have a clear view of the strengths of the school: 'we are encouraged to be role models to the younger ones,' 'we are taught to try and follow in the footsteps of Jesus,' 'our teachers really care for us.' This is a thriving Catholic school.

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

- To further develop the partnership with the two local parishes, especially in regard to the recent and planned changes in parish priests.
- To embed the use of the new chapel so that it becomes a key resource for enriching the prayer life of community.