

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## Botwell House Catholic Primary School

Botwell Lane, Hayes, Middlesex, UB3 2AB

Date of inspection: 11 February 2016



### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade 2**

The curriculum offered to the pupils is based soundly on the Curriculum Directory and actively engages pupils in their learning through a creative use of resources. Progression is built carefully into each year group. Pupils generally make good progress in their knowledge of the Catholic faith and their religious literacy is developing well. However, attainment in religious education does not yet match fully that of the core areas, particularly for the most able. Teaching is good. Checks on pupils' learning and moderation of their work have been built into the cycle of the school year. Marking and the assessment of the pupils' work is generally regular although not always in sufficient depth to help pupils build rapidly on earlier learning. The acting headteacher and senior leaders work very effectively to ensure that religious education makes a central contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The link governor for religious education and other governors, as well as the parish priest, are actively involved in supporting the school in developing the pupils' religious literacy. In discussion, governors showed a thorough understanding of the next steps for the school in classroom religious education.

### 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 overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of this school is excellent. This inclusive Catholic community empowers pupils to flourish and this is seen in pupils' happiness in school, in their very positive attitudes, and in their excellent behaviour. Pupils are very aware of the importance of helping others less fortunate than themselves. They demonstrate, at their own levels, a well-developed understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils are also alert to the needs of those from different faith traditions, highlighted through their 'virtues' bag. Their pursuit of the Common Good through charity appeals and simple service to others is excellent. In this, the staff team and pupils are supported well by governors, the parish and others in the local community. Partnership with parents, the parish and the diocese are excellent. The school's Catholic ethos is demonstrated well through the environment with its creative and imaginative displays, and through regular visits to the parish church for worship. Increasingly, children are organising worship but there are still missed opportunities in this area. The school has an honest and accurate evaluation of how well it fulfils its mission as a Catholic school.

## Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, acting headteacher, and staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited 6 parts of lessons, undertook a learning walk, experienced classroom worship, carried out five interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from discussion with the parish priest, contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of pupils' work in lessons and in their books, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The inspection of Botwell House Catholic Primary School, Hayes, 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 Sheila Nolan	Lead Inspector
Mr Daniel Keane	Associate Inspector
Miss Catherine Bryan	Associate Inspector

## Description of School

Botwell House is a three-form-entry Catholic Primary School in the local authority of Hillingdon and the locality of Hayes. The school serves families from the local parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary but pupils also come from neighbouring parishes. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 89.7%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 5.4%. The remaining pupils are from other faiths, 4.9%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 68%. One member of staff has a Catholic qualification.

There are 708 pupils on roll, with 9 pupils with statements of special educational need or education, health & care plans (EHCP). 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. There are 78 pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	312/3401
URN Number:	102422

Headteacher:	Miss Pauline Glancy (Acting)
Chair of Governors:	Mr Christopher Green

Date of previous inspection:	October 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	Good

<b>Key for inspection grades:</b>	<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?**

Since the last inspection, the school has attended to the issues noted for improvement and has reviewed and extended its procedures for assessment and moderation of pupils' work. Marking grids and regular pupils' self-assessment are in place. A link governor for religious education has been appointed. A new scheme of work has been implemented. The religious education staff have put systems in place to monitor the school's work in classroom religious education and to support professional development activities arising from evaluations.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The school's core curriculum is referenced to the Curriculum Directory, particularly in Years 5 and 6 to ensure full coverage of the four main areas. Staff have received training so that they are aware of these requirements. All year groups study Judaism and one other faith each year. Displays include Hinduism, for example, important in the local area. Progression and development is built in carefully to each year group's nine themes that anchor learning within the liturgical year. Imaginative resources are readily available to enhance learning in all aspects of religious education. These are used very creatively across year groups. Close attention to major feasts and traditional Catholic practice flesh out well central beliefs and the pupils' understanding of scripture. Key topic vocabulary is identified, developed and displayed helpfully for each unit of work. Pupils have excellent opportunities to apply their belief through the many and varied practical activities built around the liturgical calendar. Joint planning across year groups supports the subject knowledge of staff and their understanding of the sources of revelation. The school is working very effectively to promote pupils' religious literacy and is increasingly successful in setting tasks that allow them to reach high levels of religious literacy.

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

#### **Grade 2**

Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. They take great pride and care in their work in religious education. In lessons, they respond very well to the AT2 'Learning from Religion' 'Big Questions', for example, as seen in Year 6 display boards. Classroom religious education supports pupils' grasp of what it means to be a Catholic very successfully. However, although pupils achieve well in religious education, at the very highest levels, able pupils do not make as rapid rates of progress in their religious literacy as in other core subjects. The school rightly acknowledges that this is mainly because staff are still developing tasks that will allow children to achieve of their best. For the school, this is still work in progress that has the potential to ensure every group can excel in the development of their religious literacy. The diocesan attainment targets are increasingly well used to benchmark pupils' performance. Moderation procedures are frequent and rigorous.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 2**

A major strength of teaching at Botwell House is the strength of the pupils' devotional response to the work in AT2 'Learning from Religion'. Typically teaching across the school is good rather than outstanding because the tasks and activities used do not always allow the most able pupils to achieve at the highest levels. Planning across the year groups is very systematic with teachers adhering closely to the scheme of work. Planning, however, does not always give enough attention to ensuring learning at the deepest level across both attainment targets. Marking is very regular and often detailed but teachers' written comments do not always provide sufficient in-depth guidance to take the pupils to the next level. The school is fortunate to have the expertise of the new parish priest in developing further teachers' skills in teaching in religious education.

Children really enjoy their work in religious education and staff are confident in their delivery. This was clearly evident in Year 2 classes on aspects of the Mass. The work in these books showed a very full coverage of what pupils are expected to know and understand at their stage. Pupils in Reception role-played giving and receiving a blessing and were able to give informed responses to teachers' questioning. The regular use of scripture within classes means pupils are very well informed about Gospel narratives. The Year of Mercy holy doors, for example, reflect excellently the pupils' knowledge of many parables, including the lost sheep and the prodigal son. Although Year 6 pupils enjoyed their work on the Eucharist, not all were fully challenged to develop their thinking. Pupils' attainment in religious education is carefully tracked but progress is not made explicit in the school's information seen. Otherwise, the monitoring cycle for religious education indicates accurate evaluations of teaching and regular opportunities for professional development.

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

### **Grade 1**

The joint leadership of the department is effective in ensuring the consistency of teachers' planning across year groups. The subject leaders have a strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the Church. Although the creativity within religious education teaching meets the needs of pupils well, the scheme of work, until recently, did not allow enough opportunities for pupils to reach the highest levels of attainment. The subject leaders rightly recognise this need and are working assiduously to develop the scheme of work further so that there is sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils.

Professional development and training is well considered and geared to the needs of staff and pupils. Newly qualified teachers, those new to the school, and those who are non-Catholic are all very well supported in their preparation for teaching through the team structure in year groups. The subject leaders are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement among the staff. Work is moderated internally, and with the diocese. There are plans to cross moderate with other local Catholic primary schools. Self-evaluation is generally accurate. Leaders show a whole-hearted commitment to improving and sustaining high quality religious education.

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

- Support the pupils' rate of progress in developing their religious literacy by:
  - helping staff to understand how to plan and set work that will allow the most able pupils to attain highly in their religious literacy
  - ensuring that planning in lessons builds meticulously on previous deep learning
  - making best use of the new opportunities afforded the school through the parish to develop teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in teaching religious education
  - evidencing pupils' progress in religious education as well as their attainment, in line with other core subjects.

## **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, no areas for improvement were targeted. However, the school has developed further daily prayer services, often led by children. The school newsletter has a regular religious education section and families enjoy the Wednesday Word. A school notice board is in place in the adjacent parish to show case children's work, highlight parents' prayer services, and detail the school's involvement in the parish community. The mission statement of Botwell House School underpins the improved and sustained excellent behavior of the pupils. Out of 'love for each other', the pupils try to live out the motto of the 3Cs- Care, Courtesy and Concern.

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

#### **Grade I**

Governors state the following very clearly. 'As governors of Botwell House Catholic Primary School, we have a duty to ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with the common purpose and values, reflected in the school's mission statement.' To this end, the school ensures that religious education receives its full entitlement of 10 per cent of curriculum time as directed by the Bishops' Conference. Religious education within the school drives a vibrant vision of the Church's mission. All staff actively promote the pupils' spiritual, social, and moral development, acting as role models for the children. Resources and accommodation match well those allocated to other core areas. Religious education is at the heart of the school. Display around the school is a vibrant symbol of the importance of its Catholic life. Senior leaders and governors ensure that religious education is very well supported in developing both the academic and spiritual life of the pupils and the staff. Staff have very good opportunities for professional development.

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

#### **Grade I**

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school community. The school excels in providing engaging experiences of the richness of Catholic tradition. There is a planned programme of events to celebrate the Year of Mercy. The school began with watching live coverage of the opening of the Holy Door in Rome at its launch. Each classroom door is a 'Door of Mercy' and for younger pupils, these will act as stations on a pilgrimage around the school. Older pupils will visit other sites beyond the school as part of their pilgrimage experience. The parables of mercy have been used to make scriptural links with corporal and spiritual acts of mercy that the children have expressed in their 'mercy trees' and 'catch of good deeds' displayed in the classroom. Celebrations of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are key events in the school calendar. Prayer opportunities for staff and pupils are planned so that parents are welcomed to join in with the school. Parents consider that the school offers the pupils excellent opportunities for spiritual growth through the liturgy and traditional Catholic practice and prayer. Nevertheless, there are still missed opportunities to allow pupils to plan, prepare and lead both classroom worship and worship in other areas of school life.

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

### **Grade I**

The school's mission statement, 'love one another as I have loved you', is known and understood by pupils through their 'Care, Courtesy and Concern' in relation to others. The large school community celebrates its diverse cultural heritage especially during the annual international week. This culminates in Mass with the parish community. Each class researches a different country and explores learning through cross-curricular activities and workshops. Through a former pupil, for example, the pupils helped other pupils in Uganda.

The Church's call to action for justice and peace is understood by pupils through their self-giving. They learn to be stewards of creation through their eco warrior tasks. The school council is proactive in finding ways to support others. They learn the processes of decision making through exploring the national procedures and experiencing it first hand in visits to parliament. They pull together to help those in need in the school, locally, nationally and internationally. Charities at all levels benefit from the children's generous fund raising. At their own levels, pupils understand why they help others. Pupils flourish at Botwell House, developing into all-rounded individuals and citizens.

## **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 works exceptionally closely with parents and carers to share a common understanding of the school's Catholic mission within the global mission of the Church. In a recent questionnaire on religious education and Catholic life, 249 parents responded. The overwhelming majority were extremely positive about the work of the school. A very few, however, were concerned about the regularity of homework and the limited challenge in religious education. Set within the same site as the parish church, the school benefits greatly from a close relationship with the parish clergy. Further and exciting opportunities are opening up for the future with the new appointments to the parish. There is a genuine desire on the part of the school and the parish to forge even closer effective links, particularly with parents. The school is very actively involved with other deanery schools and other Catholic schools, particularly the secondary schools to which its pupils progress. The school, including governors, is active in its participation with, and support for, diocesan events. This is evident throughout the school in the way, for example, that all staff have embraced the promotion of the Year of Mercy.

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

### **Grade I**

Governors have a really good grasp of the current status of this Catholic school. They have strong systems in place to promote, monitor and sustain its Catholic life. In the absence of a substantive head teacher, they have set clear and supportive targets for the acting head teacher. The school's Catholic life is a regular item in a governors' subcommittee. Governors are well grounded in the local community, and share energetically and effectively in the strategic development of this Catholic school.

The acting headteacher, together with the senior staff, has sustained the Catholic life of the school excellently in the short time since stepping up to the role. Leaders are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. Self-evaluation is accurate and reflective and leaders clearly know what has still to improve to become an outstanding Catholic school. Excellent systems support the training of staff at all levels although there is scope to develop further a deep spirituality at all levels of the school. Nevertheless, the school expresses its Catholic identity in a very visible, creative and exciting way, not least through the environment and display. Senior leaders are committed fully to supporting both the school's Catholic life and classroom religious education.

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

- Further develop the opportunities for pupils to plan, prepare and lead regularly prayer and worship, both whole school and in the classroom.