



The Annunciation Catholic Infant School

Thirleby Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 0HQ

Date of inspection: 18th June 2014

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade 1

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy in The Annunciation Infant School is very good. A creative curriculum is provided that is based on the Curriculum Directory and relates well to pupils' needs and stages of development. The curriculum encourages pupils to make very good progress in their religious literacy and they develop very good subject knowledge of the Catholic faith at an age-appropriate level. Attainment is slightly better than that in other core subjects. Teaching is typically very good and teachers and support staff have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs. Leadership of religious education provides a model of best practice and staff work together harmoniously to ensure the highest quality of religious education. Very good systems are in place for regular monitoring of the standards of teaching in religious education. There is also regular participation in moderation activities at deanery and diocesan levels. The school's Self Evaluation Form details how the school plans to improve present practice. Religious education is valued very highly and makes very good contributions to every aspect of school life. Although somewhat descriptive, rather than evaluative, the SEF provides an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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 Annunciation Infant School in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing is outstanding. Senior leaders foster a culture where religious education is central to the curriculum and ensures that curriculum time meets, and often exceeds that required by the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. There are strong links with the parishes the school serves, in particular with the parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation. Parents speak highly of the school. Creative use is made of the church building and the school environment to provide opportunities for the children to experience the richness of Catholic tradition. Children are increasingly involved in planning and leading Acts of Worship and prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. Pupils develop an excellent, age appropriate understanding of the commitment to the Common Good. The school benefits from committed and enthusiastic governors who actively engage in the monitoring of religious education and the Catholic life of the school and provide high levels of challenge. Senior leaders communicate a clear vision of education that influences every aspect of school life and leadership and management are excellent in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

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 7 lessons and one assembly, and carried out interviews with governors, school staff, pupils and the 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 The Annunciation Catholic Infant School, Edgware, 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 Helen Lines	Lead Inspector
Mrs Catherine Nathan	Associate Inspector

Description of School

The school is a two form entry in the LA of Barnet and the locality of Burnt Oak. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady of the Annunciation, Burnt Oak; St Anthony's, Edgware and St Sebastian and St Pancras, Kingsbury Green. 100% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 100%.

There are 226 pupils on roll, with 2 pupils with Statements 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 well above average. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. 5.7% of pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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Headteacher:	Miss Teresa Lynch
Chair of Governors:	Mr Luigi Grasso

Date of previous inspection:	May 2009
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Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1*</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Very Good</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?

There were three areas for development from the last report. These were: to further develop assessment procedures, so that information gained is used to inform further planning; to ensure differentiation of activities to support and challenge the learning of all children; to carry out planned implementation of introducing other faith teaching into the religious education curriculum. The school has successfully addressed all three areas, although it acknowledges that it now needs to further develop its existing systems for collecting data and tracking pupils' progress. There is evidence of how more able pupils are challenged in lessons and of very good planning that matches closely the needs of pupils. Teaching about other faiths is now a regular part of the curriculum in school and there is evidence of good quality resources being used to deliver it.

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

Grade 1

The school has recently purchased the 'Come and See' scheme of work and is working systematically to ensure that this fully meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Lesson planning is thorough and shows clear links to the four strands of study in the Curriculum Directory. Teachers are skilled in ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to their pupils' needs and stages of development and that it engages them fully. There is very good evidence that the content of the curriculum is delivered in a progressive way and pupils are given appropriate levels of challenge across the key stages. This results in more able pupils in key stage 1 being introduced to content from the key stage 2 scheme of work. The study of other faiths is also very well-planned.

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

Grade 1

Pupils' progress in religious education is very good and their attainment at the end of key stage 1 is at least as good as, and in some cases better than, that in other core subjects. Data on pupils' outcomes is collected regularly but the school has acknowledged that they need to look at introducing more rigorous internal systems to track pupils' progress in religious education more effectively. Pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve their work and are very positive about their learning, participating very well in all aspects of lessons. Religious literacy is good and there was some very good evidence seen of even the youngest pupils confidently using religious language to express their understanding. However, the school recognises that they need to ensure that they deliver even more opportunities for higher level attainment to be achieved. Staff are involved in regular moderation exercises to ensure that assessment is accurate and uniform.

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

Overall and over time, the quality of teaching is typically very good. There is very good evidence of how the levels of attainment are used to ensure that teaching is well-matched to most pupils' needs. However the school acknowledges that they need to more consistently provide a higher level of challenge for the better able pupils and to ensure that questioning is used more effectively in lessons to extend and develop further pupils' understanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their creative approaches engage their pupils very well. For example, in one lesson some very young children enthusiastically took on the role of the disciples at Pentecost and acted out spreading the Good News of the resurrection. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and, where appropriate, marking is supportive and provides next steps in learning for the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and most pupils are achieving very well. However, support staff are not always used effectively enough during lessons and so opportunities are being missed for them to support and challenge individuals and groups of pupils, especially the better able.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The leadership of religious education is very good. The Religious Education Leader shares an enthusiastic vision with other senior leaders and their commitment to the educational mission of the Church is clear. Teaching is regularly monitored and the quality of teaching is consistently good. CPD is offered to staff on a regular basis and teachers have opportunities to plan together. All staff have high expectations of pupils and children's behaviour throughout the school is very good. Resources are very good and readily available and the school has made very good use of the space available to promote the importance and centrality of religious education to the school. The Self-Evaluation Form is generally accurate but would benefit from being more evaluative in its language. The school acknowledges that its strategic planning for religious education needs to be more tightly focused and more rigorously monitored.

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

- Develop more rigorous internal systems for the collection, tracking and analyses of pupils' progress data in religious education.
- Ensure that the level of challenge for more able pupils is more consistently defined in planning, so that opportunities are not missed for support staff to be effectively engaged in supporting them.
- Ensuring that strategic planning for religious education is tightly focused and more regularly and rigorously monitored and evaluated for impact.

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?

Whilst there were no specific targets from the last inspection relating to the Catholic life of the school, the Annunciation Infant School has continued to provide a warm and welcoming environment where its young pupils are offered rich experiences of a Catholic way of living and believing. Pupils thrive and develop into confident learners who are keen to share their experiences of the Catholic life of the school. The school now has a well above average proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language and the school supports these pupils and their families extremely well.

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

Grade 1*

Religious education receives on average more than 10% of the total curriculum time. The school budget for religious education is excellent in comparison to other core subjects. This has allowed the school to make excellent use of its limited space as well as provide high quality resources. There are a good number of very experienced and knowledgeable staff who support less experienced colleagues extremely well and senior leaders have a commitment to continuous professional development for the teaching of religious education. Governors are passionate about and committed to the school and take a very active role in developing and reviewing the quality of religious education.

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

Grade 1*

Prayer is central to the daily life of the school and there is evidence of excellent involvement of parents and extended family members in attending and participating in acts of worship in school. In a vibrant and enthusiastic assembly on the theme of the feast of Corpus Christi, pupils were helped to understand the importance of the Eucharist to Catholic life. Parents, staff, governors and pupils all participated in this assembly. Pupils themselves are increasingly involved in planning, preparing and leading worship in school through an innovative 'helping hands' group, introduced by the religious education leader. The subject leader in religious education plans to further develop this group. Pupils are given the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer through opportunities such as praying the Rosary and Stations of the Cross and their spiritual development is excellent. The recently installed prayer garden is popular with pupils and is very well-used by teachers to offer pupils excellent opportunities for quiet, reflection, sharing and discussion. The school is now looking at how best they can evaluate the opportunities offered and use the outcomes to further improve the experiences of prayer and liturgy for the pupils.

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

Grade 1*

The school has systems that are well-established and provide excellent age-appropriate opportunities for their young pupils to actively engage in supporting others. Pupils show great respect and care for each other as well as concern for those in need. They are encouraged to share with others through raising money for a range of local, national and international charities, such as Homeless Action Barnet, the Hospice Movement and Cafod. They work co-operatively together and are keen to help each other. In this way, the school has effectively established an environment where pupils begin to experience the call to 'human flourishing' and are encouraged to contribute through their gifts and talents to a community which is at the service of others. Pupils were able to speak about their fundraising activities in an age-appropriate way and also make links to their Mission Statement, 'Let our actions speak of God's loving care.' The school plans to further develop for pupils a greater understanding in simple terms of the theology behind their actions.

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

The school has very strong and active links with parents who speak very highly of the school and value the Catholic education it provides. Senior leaders show a strong commitment to the partnership they have with other Catholic schools in the Deanery. They would like to further develop their links with the junior school, although the distance between sites makes this difficult. From their first days in the nursery class, pupils and parents are actively encouraged to visit the local parish church. The Parish Priest spoke of regular visits by parents and children at the end of morning or before afternoon sessions to have a short period of quiet prayer and to light a candle. There is also very good evidence of how the school actively engages with the diocese through in-service training, deanery meetings and conferences. Governors and senior leaders take regular advantage of diocesan training and services.

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

Grade 1

The schools' mission statement is well-known and well-understood by the pupils and is reflected in the school's daily life. Senior leaders show a strong commitment to the mission of the Church in education and are able to communicate its importance to staff, pupils and the wider school community. Through carefully planned opportunities, staff are able to fully participate in the Catholic life of the school. This was shown in the prayerful way they participated in the assembly observed during the inspection. Governors are enthusiastic and able to articulate passionately their commitment to the school and their part in determining its Catholic direction. Staff are very well motivated and show an equally strong commitment to developing the Catholic life of the school. Governors and senior leaders are now engaged in developing the ways in which they monitor activities and their outcomes to better determine the school's strengths and to determine more clearly their areas for further development.

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

- Further develop how the opportunities for prayer and worship are evaluated and feed the outcomes into future development plans
- Develop in age and stage appropriate ways the pupils' understanding of the theology that underpins the call to acts of service to others.
- To continue to develop monitoring procedures to evaluate the outcomes of activities and determine areas for further development.