



Diocese of Westminster

Rosary Catholic Primary School
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DFE Number: 202/3391
URN Number: 100035

Headteacher: Mrs I. Gaffney
Chair of Governors: Mr R. Morris

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: 23rd October 2012
Date of previous inspection: 24th June 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

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 inspector spent one day in school, visited 9 lessons and a whole school Mass, and carried out three 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, examination of school documents.

The Inspection of Rosary Catholic Primary School 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 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 a one and a half form entry school in the LA of Camden and the locality of Hampstead and Belsize Park. The school serves the parishes of St Dominic's, Haverstock Hill, St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage and St. Mary's, Holly Place. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 96%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 3.5% and from other Faiths 0.6%.

There are 337 pupils on roll, with 7 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 above average. There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.

Key for inspection grades.

Grade 1: Outstanding;*

Grade 1: Very Good;

Grade 2: Good;

Grade 3: Satisfactory;

Grade 4: Inadequate.

A. Curriculum 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?

How well does the content of curriculum religious education (RE) meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade [1]

The school links their RE topics to the key areas of the Curriculum Directory. Training for teachers to become familiar with the document's learning objectives has been undertaken and more is planned for the future. Very good planning adapts the Directory objectives so that learning and resources are relevant to the age and abilities of the pupils. For example younger children learning about Baptism used role play to understand the meaning of artefacts used. Pupils learn about other faiths and local visitors enhance this teaching.

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

Grade [1]

All pupils are gaining an understanding of the teaching of the Catholic Church at a very good rate and display a growing depth of thought. This was evidenced during a year 6 lesson when pupils were challenged to explain the revelation of the Holy Spirit exemplifying different faith sources. They responded with mature and knowledgeable ideas. The standard gained in religious education is high. Pupils achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and many achieve more. RE assessments are linked to the National Levels of Attainment and pupil progress analysed. Accuracy of judgements is monitored regularly. The pupils' books are well presented and evidence a full coverage of the curriculum with a very good range of written activities.

The quality of teaching

Grade [1]

Teaching is very good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge using visual presentation and open questioning effectively to engage the interest of the pupils. Learning is linked exceptionally well with Scripture. More able pupils are challenged to develop as independent learners. For example in a Year 4 lesson children produced thoughtful ideas of how, the promises made for them at their Baptism, could impact their lives now. Lessons are particularly well planned and differentiated with clear learning intentions. Success criteria are linked to the pupils' target level allowing them to self-evaluate their work. Marking of work is thorough giving appropriate praise with questions to extend the learning. Pupils are given opportunities to respond. Homework contributes very well to pupils' learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [1]

The leadership of religious education is very good and well supported by the headteacher and senior staff. The RE subject leader has a clear, enthusiastic vision for the subject and guides staff very well. She recently undertook intensive diocesan inspection training. Monitoring by the leadership of work, planning and lessons ensures standards are high. Evaluations are accurate and effective in identifying areas for development. Seven teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS).

What has improved in curriculum religious education since the last inspection and

what should the school do to further improve in curriculum religious education?

The improvement actions from the last inspection have been fully achieved. The RE assessment data is now recorded within three sub-levels.

To further improve in curriculum religious education the school has identified the following areas for development and the inspector concurs with these:

Continue to develop RE assessment to ensure judgements link more closely with diocesan requirements.

Continue to embed linking RE topics with the Curriculum Directory.

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

Overall Grade: [1]

The inspector concurs with the school's self-evaluation judgement. Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a very good rate. The standards achieved are high. Pupils are becoming more aware of how their Catholic faith affects daily living. The use of Scripture in RE teaching is exemplary. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when given practical activities to express their ideas, such as in drama and ICT (information and communication technology). Staff are committed to the high profile given to religious education.

B. The school as a Catholic Community

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum - time, resources, budget

Grade [1]

Religious education is very important in the school evidenced by the subject receiving at least 10% of curriculum time and by its budget that matches and sometimes exceeds that of other core subjects. The senior leaders and the parish priest, who is a governor, offer teachers strong support, active guidance and regular training. Governors are aware of the importance of religious education but do not engage fully in their role to challenge religious education teaching and learning improvement. The school has shown its very good commitment to RE by supporting the RE subject leader to undertake the 4 day Diocesan inspector training.

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

Grade [1*]

Worship and prayer are central in the school's life and make a very strong impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils' liturgical formation is extremely well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship, such as praying the Rosary using a visual prompt, services of devotion across the liturgical year, the opportunity for Year 5 and 6 pupils to go on retreat, and inviting a theatre group which focuses on developing pupils' personally and spiritually. During the inspection, the Peace Mass celebrated was of a very high standard with pupils showing deep reverence and respect. The high quality singing powerfully enriched the experience. Older pupils are very involved in both planning and leading worship such as when they volunteer to prepare "gospel" assemblies and classroom worship. Mass is regularly celebrated both in whole school and class groups. Each class leading the Mass invites their buddy class, enabling younger pupils to experience these occasions. The pupils occasionally lead a mid-week Mass in the parish. Pupils greatly enjoy the worship experiences especially those led by other pupils. The parish priest from St Dominic's makes a significant contribution to the school's sacramental life. On the inspection day a priest from another local parish was invited to celebrate.

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

Grade [1]

Pupils are very aware of the importance of service to others. This was evidenced through discussions with them. Through discussions with pupils, formally and informally during the inspection, it was very evident that year 6 and the school Council had a very good understanding of the reasons why they do good and give to others. Throughout the school the pupils are working towards linking this to Catholic social teaching. The School Council are committed to local community issues as shown by their running a fair-trade stall at the local supermarket and talking to shoppers about the moral question of buying fair-trade produce. The choir sing carols to the elderly and sick. Younger pupils are less actively engaged in practical help to others. The school and their families give generously to many diverse charities such as to "Passage" for local homeless and supporting CAFOD virtual village. Pupils are proud of their school and enthusiastically undertake a variety of responsibilities, for example, as playground squad members. They appreciate their ideas and opinions being sought through the School Council. The school demonstrates respect for other cultures celebrating these by inviting contributions from parents and pupils. Relationships within the

school are very good. Pupils appreciate the friendliness of staff who listen to them and help with problems. They describe the school as “a welcoming, loving and caring place”.

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 works in partnership with the diocese through accessing their training and implementing diocesan policies. Pupils and staff attend diocesan and deanery events and services. The head teacher mentors other Catholic heads. The school has effective links with the local parish through the parish priest and a visiting parish sister but has not yet formed formal links with the other two parishes that the school serves. The parish priest fulfils his chaplaincy role in a dynamic way to ensure home, school and parish links are continually strengthened. The school has very good links with parents who value the contribution the school makes to the faith development of their children. This is borne out through the very high number of parents (98%) agreeing and strongly agreeing with the school's overall RE and Catholic provision. RE homework often requires children and parents to work together.

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

Grade [1*]

School leaders are passionately committed to the Church's mission in education. They have a clear vision and engage all staff in implementing and developing the school's Catholic ethos. The mission statement underpins all school activities. The Catholic identity of the school is pivotal to school life evidenced by the high priority attached to worship and to pupils' faith and moral development. Each child has a personal target to fulfil. The leadership understands very well the school's strengths and development needs. Governors fulfil well their responsibilities and are influential in determining its Catholic direction.

What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school ?

Since last inspection the school has increased the number of reflection areas such as the attractive refurbished Peace Garden and the older pupils have been on retreats which have promoted their faith development.

To further develop the school's Catholic life the school needs to:

Implement the school's plans to devise more formal partnership links with all the parishes the school serves.

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]

This is a very good Catholic school with outstanding features. The committed leadership of the headteacher and senior staff with strong support from the school chaplain, who is a governor, is instrumental in effectively maintaining and developing the Catholic identity, and fostering pupils'

growing awareness of their Catholic faith. High quality displays affirm the school's Catholic designation. Prayer, worship and sacramental celebration have a powerful role in school life. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils say "we are all trying to be Children of the Light".