



Diocese of Westminster

Our Lady Catholic Primary School
Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 3TF
Telephone: 0170 7324408
e-mail address: admin@ourladys527.herts.sch.uk

DFE Number: 919 3382
URN Number: 117464

Headteacher: Mrs C Corr
Chair of Governors: Mr P McKenna

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: 30th January 2013
Date of previous inspection: 14th October 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan

Introduction

The inspector 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 six lessons, two assemblies and carried out six 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 Our Lady Catholic Primary School Welwyn Garden City 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 inspector is 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 Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady Queen of Apostles and St Bonaventure with a few pupils coming from farther afield. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 76%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 11% and from other Faiths 4%.

There are 218 pupils on roll, with one pupil with a statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 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: 2

The delivery of curriculum religious education meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are good. Pupils can talk about their faith and identify ways in which it affects their lives and relationships. Good structures are in place to ensure quality teaching and monitoring. Self-evaluation is accurate and indicates a good knowledge of the school and development areas for religious education. The subject leader models very good practice and works to ensure pupils continue to make good progress. The headteacher, supported by all staff gives 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 three areas for development in the last inspection report. These were to track pupil progress more accurately, give staff more opportunities to share good practice and to disseminate developments in religious education among the staff. The school has responded well and there is now a good tracking system which has enabled staff to set pupil targets and inform future planning. A programme of training and regular meetings has enabled staff to share good practice and gain a better understanding of developments in religious education.

To further improve curriculum religious education in the light of the new framework the school should:

1. Enable staff to continue to cross reference the Religious Education Curriculum Directory with the current scheme of work.
2. Continue the programme of internal and external moderation to ensure all staff have a secure understanding of levels of attainment.
3. To develop the marking system to include more pupil targets for improvement.

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

Grade 2

The content of curriculum religious education meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The subject leader supports teachers as they cross reference topics being taught in the area of the Curriculum Directory being covered. Staff are well supported in their medium term planning which has begun to show links to the Curriculum Directory. There is regular monitoring of the curriculum, planning, workbooks and pupil learning.

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

Grade 2

Pupil achievement, attainment and progress in religious education are good. Pupils enter the school at around the national average and high standards for all groups are evident. This has been achieved by a significant investment in resources including a new religious education scheme, training and good use of support staff. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards meet and sometimes exceed diocesan expectations. Lessons observed provided evidence of well motivated pupils who are actively engaged in their own learning. There is evidence that pupils are attaining a good standard in knowledge and understanding of religion and are developing an ability to reflect on meaning.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching is good. Lessons observed during the inspection were good and there was evidence of high teacher expectations for all groups. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a variety of strategies to engage the full range of ability. Pupils make good progress and are encouraged to become independent learners who are able to develop their understanding of scripture and religious concepts. Class teachers 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, often interactive and sometimes targets are set for further improvement. Regular monitoring of teaching is in place followed by discussion and support if needed. Good assessment procedures have enabled teachers to plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Parents are able to support their children's learning through regular curriculum newsletters.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The leadership and management of religious education are very good 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 subject leader ensures that very good support is given to new teachers and teaching assistants. High expectations for staff and pupils ensure that religious education is taught with the same rigour as other core subjects. Staff are well supported in their teaching through in-service training and frequent continued professional development. There is an excellent range of resources and the learning environment for religious education is very good. The governing body is well informed, make regular focused visits to the school and is aware of current developments in the assessment of the subject. Religious education is given high priority in the School Improvement Plan.

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 effective in developing pupils' experience in the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The leadership and vision of the headteacher and religious education 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. Their behaviour is 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 the school has continued to provide an environment where each child flourishes. 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.

The school has identified that it should monitor and assess acts of worship to give pupils more opportunities for spiritual growth to further develop the Catholic life of the school.

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 this year has a larger budget than other core subjects. Resources are very good and teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting pupils. There is a good learning environment through topical displays in classrooms and other areas of the school. All staff receive in-service support and training relating to the Catholic life of the school. Governors provide strong support in reviewing and developing the place of religious education. The priest from the local parish visits every week for celebration assemblies as well as for a planned programme of masses and liturgies. He also acts as chaplain and as an additional learning resource.

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

Grade 1

The school's provision for prayer and worship are central to its life and part of every celebration. Pupils are given opportunities for prayer, meditation and reflection and examples were seen during

the inspection. Religious education lessons sometimes end with a concluding liturgy. Sacramental preparation, which is parish based is given good support within the school. Pupils are enabled to have a wide experience of Catholic traditions of prayer and worship. Pupils are engaged in the preparation of liturgies and the masses which are an established part of the school's provision. Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured through religious education which permeates the wider life of the school. Two liturgies were visited during the inspection and pupils participated with respect, reverence and enthusiasm. Comments on the parental questionnaire were very positive about the invitations to masses and liturgies. Parents value these opportunities to join their children on their faith journey and are appreciative of the way the school supports them. There are plans to develop part of the outside area as a prayer garden.

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

Grade 1

Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of service and support for those in need. The school encourages pupils to give time and energy to support local and national charities as well as local community projects. They are actively involved with a local food bank and drop-in centre and, through 'Mission Together' are providing Braille laptops to a school in India. Pupils and families are responding with generosity and conversations with pupils indicate that they understand that the need to work for the common good and put others before themselves is rooted in gospel values. Pupils learn to respect and value those from other cultures through assemblies and visits. They are given responsibilities through the school council and play leaders and are growing in their understanding that the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community.

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 excellent with many pupils acting as altar servers at weekend masses. Key Stage 2 pupils join weekday masses on a regular basis and younger pupils visit the church to deepen their faith and understanding. The school works very closely with parents and carers who are appreciative of all that is done to enable their children to grow in faith and understanding. Some parents wrote comments praising the ethos of the school. There are also very good links with the Diocese through participation in training offered through the Education Service for both staff and governors. Senior staff attend diocesan conferences and have participated in local and diocesan 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. Headteacher, subject leader, governors and senior staff ensure that the Catholic life of the school is central to all its work. Pupils are given 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 underpinned by the mission statement, 'At Our Lady School we learn to love and love to learn with Jesus.' The statement is reviewed by the whole school community each year, is on display in every classroom and is known by pupils. Each class has a prayer focus and a display area which emphasises the importance of religious education. Governors have a wide range of expertise, visit frequently and

make a significant contribution to the life of the school. They are well organised 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 2

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

Grade 2

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

Grade 2

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

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