



Diocese of Westminster

Douay Martyrs Catholic Academy
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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: 25th - 26th November 2013
Date of previous inspection: 19th- 20th November 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mr Matthew Dell
Associate Inspector: Mrs Joanna Thornton
Associate Inspector: Mrs Nancy Conoboy

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 two days in school, visited 11 lessons, seven tutor groups during morning registration and three assemblies, and carried out seven 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, and attendance at Mass.

The Inspection of Douay Martyrs Catholic Academy, Hillingdon 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 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 an eight form entry in the LA of Hillingdon and the locality of Ickenham. The school serves all the parishes in the Hillingdon Deanery. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 55%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 22%, from other Faiths 19% and from no faith background 5%.

There are 1382 pupils on roll, of which 215 are in the sixth form. There are 119 pupils on the special educational needs register of which six pupils have statements of Special Educational Need. The prior attainment of pupils on entering the school is broadly average in relation to national standards. 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 an 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

Classroom religious education is good overall in developing pupil's religious literacy. The Curriculum Directory is used very effectively as the basis of the content for religious education. In the planning of lessons there is a good emphasis on scripture and Church teaching. The outcomes at GCSE and A level are good with pupils making very reasonable progress in some areas. There is scope for further improvement and there are signs that the current pupils will outperform those from previous years. Teaching is good and pupils are positive about their experience in religious education lessons. There is some outstanding practice in the department. In some lessons teaching needs to improve the pace and challenge so that pupils make more rapid progress, particularly for the more able. The leadership and management of the department is very good; the head of department communicates high expectations and has very good systems in place to ensure that there is good progress. The resources of the department are utilised effectively. There is a clear vision of the place and importance of religious education and a strong commitment to on-going professional development.

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?

Since the last inspection the department has improved with regard to assessment for learning so that it is now a secure feature of teaching. Pupils confidently know their current and target levels/grades, and most are able to articulate what they need to do to move towards their targets. Also, the school has been successful in recruiting religious education teachers so that the department is now fully staffed by specialists. The increase in the number of teaching groups for Year 9 has brought the subject in line with other core subjects and has resulted in a marked improvement in the experience for students in this year group.

The religious education department can improve by:

- ensuring pupils are given sufficient challenge in lessons so that they can develop greater depth of understanding and higher levels of religious literacy;
- increasing the pace of lessons and having higher expectations so that pupils make more rapid progress within lessons;
- ensuring that pupils are given consistent signposts on what the next step of their learning should be, so that they can respond explicitly to their teacher's guidance.

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

Grade 1

The content of the religious education curriculum is very good as it is well based on the Curriculum Directory. The curriculum offered by the religious education department provides a systematic study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus, the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, and the relationship between faith and life. The Curriculum Directory has been linked clearly to schemes of work, which in turn are highlighted in the individual planning of lessons. At Key Stage 3 pupils study a well designed course that includes the study of Hinduism, Islam and Judaism as distinct units; pupils report that they enjoy studying other faiths. There is also a popular unit on philosophy of religion in Year 9 where, amongst other things, pupils extend their understanding of the problem of evil. At GCSE, all pupils study St Mark's Gospel and Catholic Ethics in preparation for examinations. The department has a very good range of resources with appropriate textbooks which support the curriculum. Feedback from pupils at the end of each unit of work is providing the department with the impetus to review the curriculum provision. This is particularly true of the sixth form general religious education programme; feedback has led to the development of a new programme introduced this term which has been well received by pupils. Attendance is very high in these lessons and there are positive attitudes and good levels of engagement. This is a very good example of how the department is meeting the needs of their pupils through ongoing curriculum development.

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

Grade 2

Pupil achievement in religious education is good. At Key Stage 3 there is an upward trend in attainment. There is a growing confidence amongst staff in accurately levelling pupil work and there are very robust whole school systems in place for tracking pupil progress, however, pupils need more opportunities to demonstrate high levels of religious literacy. At GCSE there has been a move away from early entry and a positive recent commitment to enter all pupils for RE GCSE at the end of year 11. The number of pupils attaining A*-A is improving, with results now above the national average. The results for A*-C are above the national average and while some pupils make strong progress too many pupils are attaining very low grades (F, G, U). The department is making effective use of the tracking systems and as a result the progress of the current Year 11 is being tightly monitored; predictions for attainment and progress are very strong. At A level, students achieve excellent results, with some exceeding their target grade. Given the low numbers opting for the subject, an area for development is to improve recruitment; however there are some positive signs of recovery.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching is good which results in most pupils making good progress. A large number of lessons were observed during the inspection, and within the sample, some outstanding and very good lessons were seen. Specialist staff have a thorough understanding of the Catholic faith and are committed to drawing pupils into the Catholic life of the school. Typically, teaching is well informed and founded on strong staff subject knowledge. Teachers use a range of resources and learning activities to support planned work in lessons. The religious education classrooms have stimulating displays; in particular there are some very good examples of pupils' work. In the majority of lessons the relationships within classes are very positive and pupils usually engage well in activities.

Pupils are well motivated to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith. Year 11, for example, were attentive to each other's views on the sanctity of life as the teacher skilfully orchestrated their responses. In another lesson with Year 10 on the topic of ordination, the group

work was skilfully organised so that pupils made rapid progress. Some of the lessons were very well resourced with differentiated material that met the needs of pupils of all abilities. During a learning walk through sixth form general religious education lessons, some good examples of active learning were seen; techniques used elicited high levels of participation in the topic of love and relationships.

Where teaching was not as effective, the pace of learning slows and the level of challenge is not as great as it might be. In such lessons pupil's behaviour for learning was not as focused as in other lessons observed. There is also greater scope for developing the provision for the more able so that pupils of higher ability are catered for, this can also be applied to the setting of homework so that pupils have more opportunities for extending writing in religious education. Teachers mark work regularly, with GCSE work receiving detailed comments and some pupils engaged in a written learning dialogue with their teachers, but the quality of written feedback is variable across the department. The vast majority of pupils are aware of their target level or grade and most can articulate the next steps in their learning, however often this is not linked sufficiently to written feedback. Pupils would benefit from more consistent signposts on what their next step on their learning should be, so that more can respond explicitly to their teacher's guidance.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The quality of leadership and management of religious education is very good. The head of department has a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and a clear vision of how this can be realised in the work of the religious education department. The head of department has a realistic understanding of the strengths of the team and the need to improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are consistently good or better, and that there is a greater proportion of outstanding lessons. There is very good evidence that the head of department has already made some progress in this area through various interventions. The head of department regularly communicates high expectations to the team; this is seen in well organised department meetings and also in feedback given to staff on their marking. There is a strong culture of professional development; the department is well represented at in-school as well as diocesan training and this is starting to have an effect in driving up teaching standards. Members of the department have developed in their subject expertise as exam markers for various examination boards and this has been cascaded within the department to good effect.

The head of department is committed to improving the achievement of pupils so that more pupils make very good and outstanding progress. In moving towards this, a significant strength of the department is its engagement with the whole school tracking systems. This has led to a sharp focus on the levels of progress between key stages and the tracking of pupils consistently across all year groups. There are clear procedures for internal moderation of levelled work and this is a well embedded aspect of the work of the department. This has led to more confident use of levelling in Key Stage 3, however there is scope for more consistent use of sub-levelling and the development of a portfolio of standardised work for even greater consistency. The use of pupil questionnaires at the end of units is very good practice and this represents a commitment by the head of department in the drive for high standards.

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 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 the school is outstanding. The place of religious education is highly valued and recognised as the core of the curriculum. The Bishop's Conference requirements are met with regard to the allocation of curriculum time to religious education. The subject enjoys high levels of support from the leadership team and the governors. Worship and prayer are a real strength of the school. Douay Martyrs is a praying school. The sacramental celebrations of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are a significant part of the life of the school. Pupils respond very well to the range of worship and prayer that is offered to them. The school has nurtured outstanding partnerships with parents and parishes. The school is a beacon to other schools in regard to its authentic partnership with the diocese. The leadership and management of the school is outstanding; there is a vision of Catholic education that inspires and influences every aspect and dimension of the school's life. The mission statement, 'To create a Christ-centred learning community where every individual is enabled to fulfil their true potential' is lived out in the day to day life of the school. The chaplain makes an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school in developing relationships with staff and pupils so that there are high levels of support for the mission of the school. The school has developed very successfully the expectation that all departments have a responsibility to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. This is vividly seen in an audit document that illustrates how the content of different subjects fosters the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic life of school by providing high levels of challenge to ensure the school continues to further develop excellence.

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 successfully promoted the school in the local community; the school has very strong links with local Catholic primary schools and parishes. The much improved academic performance of the school has ensured that the school is held in high esteem; this is evidenced in the very high levels of support the school enjoys from the local clergy. The new chapel has opened since the last inspection, this is a significant asset and is utilised very well, it is very conducive to prayerful reflection. The chapel is used regularly for class Masses as well as for class prayer experiences. Prayer has further developed across the school and is a well established feature of pupils' daily experience.

To further improve the school should:

- continue to seek solutions to the issues that the split site school causes;
- further develop monitoring systems to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer for pupils.

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

Grade 1*

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding. The school meets the 10% curriculum time at Key Stages 3-4 and 5% at Key Stage 5 as required by the Bishops' Conference. There is an excellent budget that is in line with the core departments and the department is fully staffed with subject specialists. The department enjoys strong support from the governors and leadership team; they take an active interest in reviewing and developing the place of religious education in the school. There is a consistent message that religious education is a fundamental part of the curriculum; as a result the department has a high profile in the school.

The accommodation of the school is not fit for purpose; there is a split site and insufficient classrooms. The religious education department is not alone in requiring more specialist rooms. On a number of occasions inspectors witnessed first-hand the negative impact on learning that directly resulted from latecomers who had to travel between the two sites. There is a commitment from the governors and leadership team to try to remedy this situation and they are currently exploring various options.

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

Grade 1*

The experience of Catholic worship for the whole school community is outstanding. Prayer and worship have a very high profile in the school, aspects of which are very well resourced. The chapel is a significant asset that pupils and staff have ready access to at all times. There are weekly Masses in the chapel with different classes preparing them which result in high levels of participation and engagement. In the Mass attended by inspectors, pupils were very respectful which enabled a very reflective and prayer atmosphere. There are also regular whole school Masses for special events, for example, the whole school Mass for the school's 50th anniversary, and other opportunities for prayer and reflection such as a re-enactment of the Passion. Pupil participation in Masses and liturgies are further developed through lay ministries such as reading, Extra Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers.

Pupils attend two assemblies per week, and there is always a clear Catholic theme at the heart of these. The liturgical year is closely followed in the school. Pupils spoke very positively about their experiences of assemblies, including a recent anti-bullying assembly which they said made them think deeply. The use of scripture is well embedded and related coherently to the mission of the school. For example, in an assembly on the theme of building up the Kingdom of God it was linked well to the extensive charity work of the school with its partners in Tanzania. There is scope for further pupil involvement in assemblies, in terms of preparation and participation. Where pupils lead assembly there are high levels of engagement.

Prayer is a significant strength of this school. The prayer resources are strong and provide a very good platform for teachers to pray with their tutor groups. The school has put a lot of focus into developing prayer across curriculum and as a result in nearly all areas prayer has become a well established feature of lessons. In some cases pupils demonstrate high levels of confidence and maturity in leading prayer with their peers. To further improve, there needs to be a more systematic approach to monitoring of prayer in tutor time to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer for pupils.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has a high profile in the school. Pupils have the opportunity to go during Advent and Lent; however in Lent, pupils are given more support to receive the sacrament. The feedback from pupils is that they really value the experience during Lent. There is a very strong retreat programme in place. All Year 7 and 8 pupils go on a day retreat, which they spoke of enjoying, and retreats are offered to all other year groups, with uptake being high. Liturgies at Advent and Lent, reflections and meditations with all classes in the chapel with the chaplain, and form and other Masses are firmly embedded, providing a rich variety of prayer and liturgy experience for pupils. Worship is put at the centre of the school's practice, as evidenced by the suspension of lessons in order to watch The Big Assembly during Pope Benedict's visit to the UK.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.
Grade 1*

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good at the school is outstanding. Pupils are generous in serving each other and others more vulnerable than themselves, as well as for the good of the whole community. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. The religious education curriculum particularly provides an excellent basis for knowing and understanding the Gospel call to justice and service. Pupils are also made aware of the theology underpinning the need to give to those in need, through assemblies which make explicit the links between scripture, the school mission statement and what the school is doing as a community to live out the mission.

Within the school pupils demonstrate their talents and assume appropriate levels of responsibility and leadership in serving each other. There are very good examples of how pupils are given opportunities to serve those in the wider community. The school has a Youth St Vincent de Paul group which reaches out to the local community by supporting residential homes and a school for pupils with special needs. Each year there is a concerted effort to provide practical help by distributing Christmas hampers to those in need, and sixth form students work with the chaplain in visiting a residential home for elderly people. The school provides numerous opportunities for fundraising for national and international charities such as the Catholic Children's Society and CAFOD, which pupils engage in with enthusiasm. A very good example of how pupils are taught to respect and value their neighbour is through the partnership with a school in Tanzania. There have been a number of visits to the school by pupils and staff which are underpinned by fundraising and raising awareness of the needs of others. Pupils are consistently encouraged to respond to the call of the Gospels to serve the poor.

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;
Grade1*

The school has outstanding authentic partnerships with parents, other local schools, parishes and the diocese. The headteacher leads by example and models excellent relationships with others. The school enjoys strong support from parents; in recent surveys and the questionnaires received during the course of the inspection, parents rated the support they receive very highly and have high levels of confidence in the leadership of the school. Parents are welcomed at a number of school Masses and the chaplaincy team has high levels of engagement with parents. The school has excellent links with parishes as demonstrated by the priests who are very supportive of the school. The chaplain works very well in cultivating these strong links with the local clergy.

The headteacher takes a lead role in serving other schools in the local authority, ensuring that the voice of the Catholic education community is strong and well coordinated. In particular he has a clear commitment to, and has been very successful in, developing the school as a diocesan school. Staff regularly engage with diocesan in-service, and staff and pupils take part in many diocesan events such as the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. There are many examples of outstanding practice in this

area, such as the school's work with the Diocesan Vocations' Director; staff and pupils helped to produce a vocations film on the life of St John Southworth. Douay Martyrs is a beacon for other Catholic secondary schools; in terms of its active engagement with the services offered by the diocese and how the school put itself at the service of the diocese.

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

Grade 1*

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The headteacher has high aspirations for the school, and with his team, is committed to making Douay Martyrs "the first choice Catholic school in the area". He has a lucid vision of the Church's mission in education which is encapsulated in the school's mission statement 'to create a Christ-centred learning environment'. This vision is explicitly seen in the priority given by the leadership team to promote excellence in classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The self evaluation of the Catholic life of the school is accurate and improvement planning is effective. The leadership team and the staff are very good role models, living out the mission statement in their daily lives; the impact can be seen in the excellent behaviour of pupils in the school.

The chaplain makes an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The chaplain is very highly regarded by pupils and staff and is very effective in ensuring that the Catholic life of the school is at the forefront. There are excellent systems for induction of new staff into the Catholic life of the school. The Catholic identity of the school is evident throughout with the religious art and artefacts spread across the site. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the school through effective challenge and support. The Catholic life of the school and the work of the religious education department is scrutinised regularly. The Governors have high levels of expertise and have a clear understanding of their strategic role in supporting the school.



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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

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 1

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*