



Diocese of Westminster

More House School

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DFE Number: 2076202
Charity Number: 3127373

Headteacher: Mr R Carlisle
Chair of Governors: Mr J Davidson

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: 12th December 2013
Date of previous inspection: 22nd November 2004

Reporting Inspector: Dcn A Clark
Associate Inspectors: Mrs L Gammage, Mrs J McGurrell

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 13 lessons and 3 assemblies/form times, and carried out 4 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 a religious service.

The Inspection of More House School, Central London, 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 a two form entry independent secondary school in the LA of Kensington and Chelsea and the locality of Knightsbridge. The school serves in the parish of St Mary's in Knightsbridge, Central London. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 41%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 27%, from other faiths 14% and from no declared faith 18%.

There are 208 pupils on roll, with 1 pupil with a statement of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is below average. There is a well 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 overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy is good. The implementation of the Curriculum Directory is in place and supports the provision of Religious Studies. Students have a good knowledge of the religious education curriculum and can speak to its relevance in daily life. It was noticeable in interviews with pupils how articulate they were in describing what they were currently studying in Religious Studies and what it meant to them. The leadership of the department is effective in maintaining the quality of teaching notwithstanding the present changes and temporary arrangements. Self - evaluation is a hallmark of departmental policies to maintain and improve standards. During staff in-service training in the last two years all staff were involved in the discussions on the meaning and importance of More House being a faith school and their role in supporting its status.

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

The previous inspection said that lessons should state clear outcomes which the pupils understand. This improvement has been achieved, and in all lessons observed, clear outcomes were stated and reviewed.

To improve further in religious education the department needs to ensure that:

- The levels of attainment are embedded into the curriculum.
- The links and scope of the Curriculum Directory are clearly embedded.
- In classroom teaching the differentiation for different ability pupils is increased as much by task as by outcome.

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

Grade [2]

The syllabus developed and followed for Yrs 7 and 8 reflects the Curriculum Directory and there is work in hand to bring it even more in line. The GCSE syllabus followed in Years 9 and 10 follows the Directory appropriately. In Year 11 where almost half the pupils take the EdExcel Extended Project Qualification there is insufficient concordance between what is taught in it and the Curriculum Directory. At 6th form, the planned syllabus partially meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The Curriculum Directory assumes that the Bishops' Conference requirements of curriculum time allocated to Religious Studies are met. At More House the time requirements are below that expected by the Bishops' Conference and to that degree the content of religious education is below what is expected.

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

Grade [2]

Pupils' progression is judged to be good. Pupils' progress is above the national average and it is in line with national expectations. This is reflected in their exam results at GCSE in religious studies. The national and diocesan attainment levels need to be introduced and used at KS 3. This will ensure there is rigour in assessment and consistency in pupil progress. The department would benefit from internal and external moderation of assessments to ensure the diocesan agreed levels are fully understood and met by all members of the department. Through the ISAMS computer monitoring system each pupil's progress in religious studies is reviewed both monthly and termly. The department follows the whole school marking pattern so both achievement and variation is highlighted. Summative assessment is made through end of year tests.

The quality of teaching

Grade [2]

Eleven lessons of Religious Studies and two lessons of PSHE were observed. Teaching was found to be at least good and where teaching was very good tasks were differentiated and pupils were actively engaged. In many lessons observed the pace of the lesson was maintained and pupils benefitted from questioning and challenge from the teacher. Interviews with pupils revealed that pupils enjoy and are involved in their religious studies and were articulate in outlining what they had learned. Good use was made of ICT. Since October 2013 the Curriculum Directory, already underpinning the teaching in the RE Department, is being used in the formal mapping of the planning and delivery of Religious Studies lessons. This needs to be further embedded and national levels of attainment need to be introduced in Religious Studies to ensure a greater level of challenge and rate of progress in learning particularly at key stage 3. The departmental meetings of the religious studies teachers provide effectively for detailed curriculum planning as well as opportunities for extending subject knowledge. The acting head of department has the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and ensures that her colleagues are well briefed on Catholic matters.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [2]

The leadership and management of religious education are good. The permanent HOD is away on maternity leave. The curriculum planning which she left in place is comprehensive, especially for Years 7 and 8, and for GCSE. The acting HOD has carried forward her policies and materials and developed both initial elements of levels of attainment and introduced further mapping of curriculum areas to the Curriculum Directory. Opportunities for peer observations are being sought to improve and share teaching strategies, though such opportunities have not been found in the very tight current timetable this year. Meetings of the staff teaching religious education are held on a regular basis and there is evident focus on continuing improvement. Staff review the exam syllabuses chosen and the resources available to support their teaching with a view to achieving improved pupil involvement and results.

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: [2]

The pupils have a good experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing. The school is effective in creating and sustaining a community of young people who have learned to support each other and to look to the needs of others outside the school who they might help. The school puts great emphasis on encouraging pupils to live out gospel values of care and compassion in their ordinary lives, always respecting the diverse religious beliefs among their pupils. However the pupils do not experience opportunity to engage in prayer each day or develop their own prayer style. The Governors provide good leadership in ensuring the values of the common good and Catholic social teaching are embedded in the culture of the school but there is insufficient emphasis on liturgical and religious expression. Liturgical celebrations are linked to the Church's calendar. The school maintains its ecclesial commitment in its rejection of all requests for pupils to have a reduced number of lessons in religious studies. In contrast however, the school does not yet meet the Bishops' requirement that it timetables 10% of curriculum time for religious studies.

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

The previous inspection report did not indicate any areas of improvement in the Catholic life of the school.

To improve further the Catholic life of the school it needs to ensure that:

- Curriculum time for religious education is 10% at KS3 and KS4, and 5% at 6th Form
- There is a greater emphasis on prayer, whether at the beginning of each day or at appropriate times during the day, for example during form periods or at the beginning of meals.
- The Governors engage with the diocese to review provision and resources for the Catholic life of the school.

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

Grade [2]

Religious education has different degrees of presence in these various areas. Regarding time, there is a substantial need to increase the time allocated to religious education to reach that recommended by the Bishops' Conference; in terms of staff to deliver the present level of RS provision, there is adequate staff; in terms of accommodation, the teaching rooms and space allocated to religious education are on a par with all other subjects, taking into account the fixed limited space the school has at its disposal for all subjects; its library and IT resources are good and the budget is equal to or more generous than other subjects. Further staff in-service training will aid the vision of religious education being at the core of the curriculum.

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

Grade [3]

Worship and prayer are judged to 'require improvement'. Worship is considered important at the school, which is evident in masses at the beginning and end of terms. Pupils have started to be encouraged to help in the planning and preparation of these Eucharistic celebrations. This should be further developed and enhanced. The school chaplain visits the school in order to celebrate the Eucharist but is not involved in other areas of the Catholic life of the school. The role of chaplaincy in the school needs to be developed. The liturgical arrangements and the sacramental programme preparing pupils for Confirmation are well managed and promoted. There is a lack of evidence of prayer at the start of lessons and in form time. It became evident throughout the day that prayer did not feature in the daily routine of the pupils. There is a need for explicit prayer for all girls to take place daily. Apart from helping compose bidding prayers for the form masses held once a term, pupils have fewer occasions than is desirable to compose prayers to do with themselves, their fellow pupils, or their families. There is a chapel prayer group and this needs to be nurtured and extended.

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

Grade [1*]

This is outstanding with pupils' gifts and talents extended through numerous extracurricular activities, for example in music, drama and sport. The promotion of Sacred Music is integral to the spiritual life of the pupils and staff, with over a quarter of pupils' participation in the international music tour to Greece in October 2013. The talents and achievements of the whole school community are celebrated through assemblies, a school blog and postcards home. The spirit of charity and service of neighbour permeates the life of the school with many initiatives originating from pupils and are pupil led for example, audio books, Cancer Research and the Lyla Nsouli foundation. This is in addition to the three main charities adopted annually by the school. From October 2012 to December 2013 over £5,603 has been raised. The values of the gospel are lived out at More House.

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 [3]

This is an important area where the governors need to engage with the diocese to review provision and resources for the Catholic life of the school. There is good partnership with the parents and their replies to the questionnaire were evidence of their strong links with the school. The sense of partnership with the education service of the diocese is developing. Staff attend current diocesan training events relating to religious education. The recent programme to prepare pupils for their Confirmation led to improved contact and relationship with the local parish.

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

Grade [3]

The leadership and management is insufficiently effective in promoting overtly the Catholic life of the school, especially in respect of prayer. However the expression of gospel values by the leadership and management of the school is effective in promoting implicitly its Christian life. This is specially the case regarding the day to day relationships in the school, where a vision of positive service and

respect between staff and pupils and between pupils is evident. Pupils are also made aware of the social issues and injustices in the world and the Christian response we are called to make. The emphasis is on Catholic values in practice. In staff appointments the Catholic nature of the school is stressed and all staff are encouraged to ensure the policies and practices reflect the mission of the school. The school's self-review involves looking to understand its Catholic nature in today's world and the Governors share in developing strategic leadership in this area. The Governors need to develop a 'strap line' mission statement for the school which reflects its Catholic nature.



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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 [2]

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 [2]

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

Grade [2]

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

Grade [3]

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 [3]

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

Grade [3]