



Diocese of Westminster

Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School

89 Addison Rd, London W12 8BZ

Telephone: 020 7603 8478

e-mail address: mail@cvms.co.uk

DFE Number: 2075402

URN Number: 100506

Headteacher: Mr P Stubbings

Chair of Governors: Mr M Craven

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: 8th May 2013

Date of previous inspection: 8th November 2006

Reporting Inspector: Deacon A Clark

Associate Inspector: Mr M Dell

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 and a half days in school, visited 9 lessons and 2 assemblies, and carried out 7 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 Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, Holland Park 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 four form entry in the LA of Kensington and Chelsea and the locality of West Kensington. The school serves the parishes of across London. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99.7%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 0.1 % and from other Faiths 0.1%.

There are 955 pupils on roll, with 29 pupils with statements 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 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: 1*

The overall effectiveness of the religious education department is outstanding; pupils gain a solid foundation in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith. The department has made excellent progress on previous improvement targets from inspection and now are much stronger at self-evaluation and have greatly improved schemes of work and systems of assessment. The content of lessons taught meet all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and resources are used which inspire learning. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils make outstanding progress. There is departmental culture of high expectation in which pupils thrive. The leadership of the department is very good; the head of department displays excellent management skills in planning and supporting his staff. Teachers work together to ensure that resources are stimulating so that pupils achieve their best. The department makes an exemplary contribution of the Catholic 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?

The last inspection required that the religious education department developed the self-evaluation of the religious education department, focusing on schemes of work and assessment and on pedagogy. This improvement target has now been fully met. The department has significantly improved its approach to self-evaluation. The diocesan self evaluation form is thorough; the department improvement plan accurately reflects the needs and aspirations for religious education. Schemes of work are in place that are detailed and there is a coherent approach to assessment.

The department can further improve in classroom religious education in the following ways:

- further develop staff understanding of levelling at key stage 3 so that there is increased confidence in making precise judgements about pupil progress;
- further develop departmental monitoring systems to ensure that there is consistent high quality written feedback given to pupils.

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

Grade 1*

The content of the classroom religious education is outstanding. The department meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Since the last inspection this has been an area of improvement; there are now schemes of work in place that are very thorough and specify in detail the implementation of the Curriculum Directory at all stages. There is a very palpable commitment to ensuring pupils experience a systematic programme of study organised around the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, the Church, its beliefs, celebrations and way of life of Catholics who follow that teaching. At key stage three the department draws on the 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme, however, supplementing it with their own in-house resources. Whilst pupils are taught about Other Faiths in key stage three, this is an area for further curriculum development in terms of

depth of study. At key stage four pupils follow the Edexcel GCSE, studying St Mark's Gospel and Religion and Life based on a study of Roman Catholic Christianity. The curriculum for sixth form general religious education uses Christian art as a framework for exploring belief and practice. This is an imaginative approach to further developing pupils understanding of the Faith.

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

Grade 1*

Pupil's progress and attainment in religious education is outstanding. The majority of pupils join the school with above average levels of attainment. At the end of key stage 3 the majority of pupils have made excellent progress, particularly at the higher levels. At the end of key stage 4 the A*- C pass rates is above the national average by almost 20%; a position that the department is able to maintain. The numbers of pupils who achieve A*-A grade is very high and there has been a notable increase over the last three years. The introduction of Philosophy A Level has had an impact on recruitment for A Level Theology (Religious Studies) however the school has addressed this problem; there are signs of a recovery with a steady increase numbers choosing the Theology A Level. Whilst A Level numbers are low, pupils attain very high grades, with many pupils leaving to study the subject at degree level. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning in religious education lessons; they are motivated and want to learn. Pupils have a real fondness for their teachers who they feel go out of their way to ensure they do well. Pupils speak highly of the good opportunities they get in religious education to express their own opinions. One pupil commented, "RE is really good because our teachers make us think."

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

The quality of teaching is very good. At its best the teaching is lively and pupils make rapid progress in developing knowledge and understanding of religious education. The subject knowledge of religious education teachers ranges from very good to outstanding. Teachers display a strong commitment to teaching Catholic belief and religious literacy. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and encourage pupils to engage actively through challenging questioning, an example of this was seen in an A Level lesson on virtue ethics. There is good practice in supporting pupils with special needs, where well thought out differentiation provides a scaffold to help them make good progress. For example, in a low ability set where pupils were studying the Catholic response to abortion, learning was organised very effectively so that pupils could develop sophisticated reasons to support the Catholic view. Homework is regularly set and pupils have their work marked habitually and in some areas they are given excellent written feedback to help them understand how to improve their work. The department needs to spread this good practice so that all pupils receive quality written feedback that precisely identifies what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 1

The quality of the leadership and management of religious education is very good. There is a clear vision for religious education and its place within the educational mission of the Church. The department has strong systems in place to ensure that teachers are supported in their teaching. Regular lesson observations of members of the department have led to targeted support where needed. There is a well-established culture of sharing teaching resources. All members of the religious education department are practising Catholics who witness to their faith through their work and provide good role-models to pupils. There could be further opportunities for

department moderation of levelling for key stage 3, so that teachers have increased confidence in making judgements about pupil progress. This is an area of development that the department has recognised needs further attention. Self-evaluation is now a strong feature of the work of the department and the departmental handbook is thorough and well supported by policies and procedures that enable high standards from all.

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 in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing is very good. The Catholic vision of the school which is put into practice appropriately in every area of school life, means that religious education is at the core of the curriculum. The staff are united in their service to the school, ensuring that the teachings of Christ permeate all areas whether academic, pastoral care, discipline or service of others. The very strong tradition of music develops the pupils' sense of finding God in liturgical celebrations and in the world around. The awareness of being a diocesan school, in a special way because of its foundation by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan, leads it to value the integral way it is part of the diocesan family. His motto 'Amare et Servire – To Love and to Serve' is truly the character of the school.

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

The last inspection recommended that the school ensures that RE is allocated 10% of curriculum time as required by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. It has achieved the Bishops' recommendation in Years 7, 8 and sixth form, but it has not yet done so in Years 9, 10 and 11. It has plans in place to improve, but this will not take effect fully for a number of years.

To improve further the Catholic life of the school, it needs to:-

- increase classroom religious education time in RE to 10% in all years in KS3 and KS4.
- develop more variety in its prayer and worship, especially ensuring occasions where pupils can also become accustomed to praying in an informal and spontaneous fashion.
- enlarge the pupils' knowledge and understanding of how music, specially sacred music, contributes to their experience of the Catholic faith.

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

Grade 1

The strong Catholic ethos and vision of the school is the foundation of a curriculum with religious education at its core and a Catholic view of the world pervasive in the other subjects. The RE staffing provision is very good made up almost entirely of experienced specialists with theology qualifications. The accommodation is good, within the constraint that the peculiar geography of the school does not allow for many subject specialist classrooms. The RE department is generously provided for and its budget is sufficient to allow it buy the resources and artefacts it needs. The school has a focussed induction programme in place for all new staff to ensure that the spirit and catholicity of the school is effectively passed on. A retreat programme is in place which responds to the diverse needs of the pupils of different ages and stages. Chaplaincy provision of a priest chaplain for two days a week is a measure of priority given to the spiritual care of the pupils by the school's leadership. The school has reached the required allocation of curriculum time to RE in Years 7, 8 and sixth form but has not yet reached it in Years 9, 10 and 11.

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

Grade 1

The experience of Catholic worship at the school is very good. It has very laudable traditions which should be maintained and developed. There is an excellent focus on the liturgical calendar and the pupils find strong links in their experience of parish and school celebration. The Mass is celebrated in the school each Wednesday and Friday for different year groups, the celebrants on Wednesdays being the priests from surrounding parishes. Mass on Fridays is celebrated by the priest chaplain who also celebrates a voluntary Mass on Thursday in the Oratory. Masses on Wednesday and Fridays are celebrated in the hall space which later becomes a Sixth Form private study area and, during lunchtime, the school dining room. The attention of the pupils is outstanding in their reverence, and the Schola's singing adds to the occasion. Older pupils appeared constrained in their participation in the singing and the pupils will benefit in being helped to understand better the unique heritage of music in their school. The priest chaplain, present in the school two days a week, provides opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and along with a counsellor from the Catholic Children's Society there is access to support and counselling. The Schola is a source of great pride to the school community, and it has sung in the Vatican, Poland, Prague and California. It is an important symbol of the diocesan commitment of the school that it sings every half term in Westminster Cathedral.

There are opportunities for formal prayer regularly in the course of the day: the vast majority of lessons begin and end with a sign of the cross; the majority of staff pray the Angelus (or other traditional prayer) at noon with their pupils. The school should also develop opportunities for the pupils to learn to pray in an informal way, for example, sharing personal prayer intentions at the beginning of the day, as well as preparing and leading the class prayer.

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

Grade 1*

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good, service and social justice are outstanding. Along with the great efforts in raising money for charities, and learning about situations of need and injustice in the course of classroom RE, the use of the Schola to raise awareness and concerns, as

well as money, is to be praised. Along with the Schola, there are also a number of choirs, orchestral ensembles and jazz band which all play their part in outreach and service. The school runs a community service in the Sixth Form which the great majority of pupils become involved in, through a variety of ways. Whether its raising money and awareness for the Church in Need to specific initiatives such as the visit of the RE governor, the headteacher and two sixth formers to a parliamentary briefing by visiting Bishops from Syria and Nigeria, the school is notable for helping pupils understand and put in practice the gospel call to be a church for the poor. The school goes the extra mile to support pupils with special needs and this has resulted in Year 7 having the highest proportion of statemented pupils in the Borough (6.4%).

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 is generous in its partnership with other diocesan schools, both with music and RE in-service. It engages firmly and positively with the diocesan leadership and those acting on behalf of the Archbishop. The governors, headteacher, associate headteacher as well as other members of staff attend diocesan training conferences and courses. Archbishop Nichols celebrated Mass in the school in Dec 2011, Bishop Sherrington, chair of the Education Commission, in June 2012. A very special occasion was the school's Foundation Day Mass celebrated by the Archbishop in the Cathedral at the beginning of this academic year. It reaches out to local primary schools as well as offering shared expertise with RE staff from other Catholic secondary schools. The school has a strong relationship with the parents who speak very highly of its work in handing on the teaching of the Catholic faith to their children. The response of the parents' questionnaire was very positive about the school, with the one noticeable point for improvement being that parents would like to be even better informed about the RE programme.

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

Grade 1*

The governors, headteachers and senior leadership are very effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. On the music, charity and service fronts, staff and pupils know they are encouraged to reach out to others. A spirit of pride and high expectation surrounds the Catholic life of the school and the leadership of the Governors, headteachers and staff is outstanding in ensuring it continues. The Governors build into their agendas and meetings regular reports on how the Catholic vision of the school is being maintained. The headteacher and associate headteacher build this Catholic ethos in their dealings with parents, staff and pupils at all levels, whether speaking to a whole year assembly to helping a pupil and his or her family who are facing a crisis. The pupils are aware of the expectation of the school that when they leave the Vaughan and join adult life, they should, by their Catholic commitment, be witnesses and bearers of Christ's teaching in the world. They have as role models the committed staff, the governors who bring so much talent and mature Christian wisdom with them and the Old Vaughanians who are distinguished by their loyalty and service to the community.



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Grade 1*

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

Grade 1*

The quality of teaching

Grade 1

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

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

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