

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report



## Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls

Holland Walk, Duncombe Road, London, N19 3EU.

Date of inspection: 13 May 2016

### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade 1**

Pupils at Mount Carmel are provided for very well, through a rich religious education curriculum that is based on a published scheme but has been matched carefully to the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Well-considered resources, particularly those to help the development of religious literacy, support the teaching and learning in the department very effectively.

Students respond very earnestly to their classroom work in religious education. They show outstandingly positive attitudes in their responses, both written and orally. These positive attitudes contribute greatly to their rapid rates of progress from their starting points. Attainment in religious education is excellent and rates of progress are fast across almost all year groups. The close attention to spelling and grammar in written work as pupils move through the school pays massive dividends at Key Stage 4. Pupils are empowered to express themselves fluently in writing as well as orally so that they attain excellent GCSE results in religious education examinations. Results are well above average. Given the starting points of many of the students, these results demonstrate outstanding achievement from Year 7 to Year 11.

Teaching across the department over time has been typically at least good and often outstanding. The quality of teaching is evidenced clearly by the depth of learning of the pupils and by their success in examinations. The recent unavoidable turbulence in staffing has not been allowed to impact negatively on the quality of learning. Efforts, well over and above what might be expected, by the acting head of department have supplemented timetabled teaching to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible opportunities to develop their religious literacy. There is further work to do, however, in ensuring that pupils at the early stages of learning English are always well catered for in all lessons. Checks on pupils' learning and moderation of their work have been built into the cycle of the school year. Marking, at its best, is very regular and ensures the students not only know how to improve but also do improve their work. There is, however, some inconsistency in the quality and frequency of written feedback to various groups of pupils. Nevertheless, oral feedback in lessons is typically skilled and generally advances learning well. The exceptionally systematic approach to regular assessment and revision opportunities in Years 10 and 11 underpins much of the pupils' success in religious education examinations.

The subject leader drives forward the department's vision to enable the diverse cohort of pupils from a wide range of traditions to become thoughtful and creative adults. In this way, they can develop into compassionate human beings and support the mission of the Church in their own ways. Staff are regularly involved in continuing professional development through the diocese. Clear and robust systems are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the department. Self-evaluation of the work of the department is generally accurate. The department contributes very well to the Catholic life of the school, not least through enrichment activities and clubs that enhance the growth of leadership among the students. Governors are supportive of the department's work in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The department has stepped up to the additional challenge of even further promoting the Catholic life of the school in the absence of a school chaplain.

**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 senior managers and governors actively promote the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school despite the current turbulence over its future. They have worked closely with the local parish priest to support the work of the religious education department in upholding the Catholic life of the school.

Religious education continues to receive 10% of curriculum time at both key stages. It has a tangible impact upon the whole school community helping staff and pupils to frame their lives through faith and Catholic traditions. Pupils have numerous opportunities for corporate and individual prayer. There are well-planned opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist, access the sacraments, including the Sacrament of Reconciliation, to participate in assemblies and in daily class prayer. Pupils act as readers, altar servers, lead prayers and assemblies, and are members of the impressive school choir. Occasionally, however, assemblies are marred by distractions external to the event itself. All pupils, irrespective of their faith traditions, take an active part in Catholic worship.

Mount Carmel strives to see that all of its pupils flourish. This is in line with its motto, 'Love, accept and forgive one another and treat each other with respect'. Pupils' gifts and talents are regularly celebrated and rewards encourage students to even greater efforts, engendering a sense of their self-worth. When in post, the school chaplain did much to promote the pupils' understanding of the Common Good and the theology that underpins actions. Pupils follow Christ's call to service at local, national and international level. Their work ranges from playing music for residents with dementia and working with a local hospice to supporting a school in Ghana, and other national and international charities. The choir also continues its work through singing for local Masses and events. The Mercy Apostles coordinate charity events throughout the school and keep up to date with what is happening in terms of the Year of Mercy.

A small minority of parents responded to the questionnaires and all were very positive. The parent group is widespread and diverse in tradition but all wrote warmly of the school. The school has excellent relationships with the local parish. There are very good links with the diocesan adviser and good participation in professional development and diocesan and deanery events. The headteacher and governors have worked closely with the diocese over the future of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate, the headteacher, senior team and governors continue to work determinedly to do the best for the pupils in the time remaining for this Catholic school, and to ensure the pupils do not suffer in the changeover.

**What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?**

- Ensure consistency in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils across all classes so that it always matches the best practice.
- Make sure that opportunities are always planned in religious education lessons to support the learning and language needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English.

**What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?**

- Ensure that the planning of assemblies always ensures that links to the scriptures are explicit.
- Make sure that assemblies are not unnecessarily disturbed by technical difficulties and other distractions.

