

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Vale Lane, Acton, W3 ODY  
Date of inspection: 1 July 2016



### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education (RE) in developing pupils' religious literacy is judged to be outstanding. This school opened in September 2012 and has quickly established itself as a very fine place of learning for young children and pupils. The previous head laid very strong foundations for the future development of the school and this work has been carried on by the interim headteacher. The subject leader of RE is exemplary in her knowledge and enthusiasm in developing a high quality of Catholic education in the school. She provides training and support for all staff and models excellent teaching of RE. The curriculum is thorough and well planned for. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is rapid and by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is above the national average therefore both attainment and progress are judged to be outstanding. A very noteworthy feature of this school is the pupil's verbal and oral responses to questions and challenge in class. This is of a really high standard and is commendable. Pupils are articulate and courteous and eager to share what they have learned. Standards of written work are also at least good. More clearly differentiated tasks are needed for pupils of all abilities to allow them to make better than expected progress and would ensure that both the higher and lower abilities can equally excel in their written work. Teaching is at least good in all classes and is characterised by high expectations and challenge from all teachers. Support staff play an effective role in delivering quality teaching. The leadership and management of Catholic education are also being well supported by an experienced governing body who provide a good balance of acting as a critical friend and providing support and direction. The Catholic education provided is outstanding.

### 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 I**

The school's overall effectiveness in this area is also judged to be outstanding in every area. The classrooms, halls and outside areas have been developed to the highest standard. This is clearly a Catholic school from the minute one enters the building. Resources have been well purchased and reflect the Catholic life of the school in a very positive manner. Parents are very supportive and appreciative of all the work the school does and this is true of parents of all faiths. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. The prayer and worship of the school provides extensive opportunities to foster spiritual development among the pupils. Partnerships are strong and thriving at all levels and the school is an active member of the diocesan community. The pupils' knowledge of Catholic social justice teaching is a special feature of this school including the theology that underpins this area. The governing body, parents and all staff share a common vision for the school to develop as a vibrant and dynamic Catholic school in this area.



## **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 has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?**

This is the first Section 48 Inspection of this new school.

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

#### **Grade I**

The content of the Holy Family Catholic School's religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The curriculum is comprehensively planned and developed by the subject leader of RE. The school supplements its core curriculum with a wide range of other resources. The school is committed to enhancing its curriculum by using a creative approach to the teaching of RE so dance, drama, music and art are widely used to enrich pupils' learning. Pupils are being taught about other faiths such as Judaism and Islam in a sensitive and age appropriate manner. Since it opened, the school has invested heavily in a wide range of resources linked to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the overall delivery of its RE curriculum. The planning, delivery and content of this school's religious education curriculum is of a very highest order and the RE subject leader works tirelessly to promote this rich curriculum offer.

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

#### **Grade I**

Pupil achievement overall is judged to be outstanding. Pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) below the national average. This is mainly because of the high number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). They make rapid progress in the EYFS stage and again by the end of Key Stage 1 where attainment is high and above the national average. Therefore both attainment and progress are judged to be outstanding. This is because of the high priority given to the subject and the high expectations all teachers and staff have of their pupils. All pupils are expected to aspire to excellence in RE. Older pupils are beginning to study scripture and this should lead to even higher standards of knowledge and understanding in the future. The standard of oral and verbal response from the pupils is a particularly noteworthy feature of this school. The pupils are highly articulate. Pupils are keen to answer questions in class and are equally keen to share their knowledge and understanding with visitors. Standards of written work are also high but could be even better if the work and tasks provided were differentiated more for the pupils of both lower and higher ability. Work produced is comprehensive and thorough and a detailed scrutiny of the books showed that pupils produce a wide range of written work. The books are neatly presented and tidy and pupils take pride in sharing their work. Pupils of all faiths and none declared produce an equally high standard of work. Pupils are enthusiastic in their learning and are exceptionally well versed in religious language and vocabulary.

### **The quality of teaching**

#### **Grade I**

The quality of teaching across the school is judged to be outstanding. All teaching is judged to be at least good or better and this leads to the rapid progress the pupils make. All teachers have high

expectations of their pupils and are constantly seeking to further enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. This happens during lessons and also is evidenced by the detailed marking that teachers employ in correcting the pupils work. Pupils do know how to improve their work and the system employed by the school is effective and age appropriate. Planning is thorough and ensures a good pace to all lessons. Planning would be even better if it was further differentiated according to ability. This area is overseen by a highly effective RE subject leader who gives generously of her time. Teachers are creative in their delivery of RE and frequently use drama, art and music to further enhance their teaching. Teachers and support staff clearly have good subject knowledge of RE and are very committed to delivering a high standard of education. This is most clearly in evidence when one observes teachers using high order questioning to elicit even better responses and answers from the pupils. This is a regular feature of lessons for all ages in this school. Homework is regularly given and is enjoyed by both parents and the pupils as it gives a chance for families to collaborate together and deepen their children's understanding. This is greatly appreciated by parents of all faiths.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade I**

The leadership and management of religious education is also judged to be outstanding. The interim headteacher is highly experienced and has played a key role in the outcome of this inspection. He is being very well supported in leadership by a highly effective deputy head. The delivery of RE is led, organised and developed by an exemplary subject leader. Her work, knowledge and expertise is of the very highest standard. Her work is invaluable to the development of this school. The subject leader is currently studying for a higher degree in Applied Theology and this should greatly benefit the school in the future. She supports all existing staff in all their endeavours and also delivers high quality training for newly qualified teachers. She leads by example and models lessons in RE for all staff. She is reflective and is constantly seeking ways to improve standards even more. The governing body are experienced and highly knowledgeable about all aspects of the Catholic education of the school and are very eager to see the school develop even further. There are plentiful opportunities for staff training and a large number of teachers have availed themselves of these opportunities by obtaining higher qualifications for teaching in Catholic education.

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

- Provide more differentiated planning, activities and work in RE lessons so that pupils of both lower and higher abilities have a chance to excel even further in the written work they produce.

## **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 has improved since the last inspection?**

This is the first Section 48 Inspection of this new school.

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

#### **Grade I**

At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all the key stages every week. A generous annual budget is allocated for the subject in line with other curriculum areas and the subject is very well resourced. Teachers have very good subject knowledge of religious education in accordance with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for England and Wales. The new accommodation is of a very high standard both indoors and outdoors and in every classroom seen. One knows this a vibrant and proud Catholic school from the minute one enters the building. It is very well designed and religious displays and artifacts are prominently on display in every area. The school has also developed its outside area extensively and there are some quite delightful prayer gardens that the pupils can use. The school places a very high emphasis on the centrality of the Catholic faith to its everyday mission. The Catholic life of the school is being very well led by the senior leadership team who are working to a common purpose. The governing body perform their role well in monitoring all aspects of this area and it is judged to be outstanding.

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

#### **Grade I**

Prayer and Catholic worship are outstanding. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. From the minute the children start in the Nursery class they encounter a rich Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. Prayers for the younger children are quickly taught and learned and pupils' knowledge of the traditional prayers of the church is very sound. The local parish priest is a key figure in the school and is a regular presence. Every class has a prayer corner with an appropriate liturgical colour for the time of year. Praying together takes place in classrooms, assemblies and in a wide range of liturgies throughout the year. For example there is a Gospel assembly on Monday and "Living like Jesus" award on Friday. Two very well structured acts of prayer and worship were observed during this inspection. The day begins and ends with prayers throughout the school. Pupils are also given ample opportunities to compose their own thoughts and prayers in written and spoken form and pupils have their own book of prayers which they can compose and keep. The school also has developed some lovely outdoor areas for prayer and quiet contemplation. Parents are regularly invited to both school and the adjacent parish Masses and the response is very good. Children are also heavily involved in preparing events for the liturgical year and the school and parish priest are eager to develop this work even further. The school is highly evaluative of its opportunities for worship and liturgy and is constantly looking to evolve its practice. Recent innovations have included the distribution of Word on Wednesday to parents and a Celebration of the Year of Mercy

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

### **Grade I**

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good is outstanding in this school. Holy Family has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to ‘human flourishing’ and social justice. This provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents as individuals and as a community. This was evident during the inspection listening to some of the discussions around the cardinal virtues such as justice and prudence. Pupils understanding of this area was of a very high order. One of the most noteworthy aspects of this school is the pupil response to questions about why they are called to serve. Examples heard were: “Because we are following the example of Jesus” and “God wants us to do good like the man in the parable (the Good Samaritan)”. Pupils are theologically aware from a very young age. Holy Family has a well-established ‘Achievement Assembly’ that illustrates respect and value of each individual. All the pupils’ gifts are recognised and celebrated and pupils are encouraged to share with others which illustrates their understanding of the call to serve. Holy Family uses Caritas in Action which has seven themes appropriate to the EYFS and KS1 & 2. The school has embraced this area very well and it is now an integral part of its RE curriculum. A themed week is timetabled every half term to provide opportunities for a deeper understanding of social justice and the Common Good. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need in a sustainable manner and are proactive in creative ways of responding locally, nationally and globally. One World Week has become established as a highly valued week where parents get involved to promote different cultures. The school launched the Minnie Vinnies in late 2015 and is eager to develop this work further.

## **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 I**

This is a major strength of the school in every aspect. The school has a strong and living commitment to its relationships with parents, parish, deanery, local Catholic schools and the Diocese of Westminster. Parents are highly appreciative of the life and work of the school as evidenced by a questionnaire and in interviews. This is true for all parents of all faiths. Parents really want this school to prosper and thrive in the future. They are invited in to the school to celebrate a wide variety of events. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and shares the ambition for the school to further develop its Catholic life, its community and identity. The school has worked very closely with the Diocese of Westminster since it opened and staff regularly attend diocesan training and deanery moderation. The RE adviser is a welcome visitor to the school.

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

### **Grade I**

The leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding in all areas. There is a shared ethos among the leadership of the school to promote Gospel values. The previous headteacher, who left at Easter played a major role in the highly successful development and evolution of this Catholic school and its identity. Her vision and drive has resulted in an outstanding Catholic environment. The interim head has successfully and calmly carried this work on. His senior leadership team, especially the deputy head and RE subject leader

play a major and significant role in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The governing body are experienced and provide effective strategic leadership of the school. They have systems in place for oversight and monitoring the life and mission of the school. The whole Catholic community are greatly supportive and appreciative of the leadership and management of this particular school.

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

- Further develop the role of the Minnie Vinnies.
- Continue to develop the work between school and parish for Sacramental life as the pupils grow older and the school capacity grows