

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Bow Lane, London N12 0JP

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 22 September 2016



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The religious education (RE) curriculum is well planned for and plays a central part in the education of pupils in this school.
- The head teacher and governors are effective in driving forward standards of RE within this school and show a strong commitment to the subject.
- The learning environment for pupils in the early years is of a high standard and activities are appropriately structured for pupils at this young age.
- Teaching is good in almost all classes seen. Support staff play a key role in supporting pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils enter the school broadly in line with the national average and most pupils leave with attainment either at or above the national average. Progress therefore is equally judged to be good.
- The school is ambitious to see even higher standards in the future.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The whole community is united in its desire to live and promote the Catholic life of the school.
- There are very strong and sustainable links between the home, the school and the parishes the school serves.
- Opportunities for prayer and liturgy are plentiful and pupils regularly plan and lead their own liturgies and acts of worship
- The school supports a wide range of charities both at home and overseas and strives to teach pupils about the Common Good.
- Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding and exemplified by the role of the head teacher and governing body.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently outstanding in all classes.
- Opportunities for creativity in the RE curriculum are being missed.
- Work is being differentiated for pupils of lower and higher ability but this needs further development.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The main area of improvement has been in the introduction of a new comprehensive and systematic scheme of work in RE. Governors now play a crucial and effective role in monitoring and evaluating Catholic education within the school.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of the religious education curriculum for this Catholic school fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). There is one RE scheme from the Early Years Foundation (EYF) to Year 6. The curriculum is carefully planned for by the religious education leadership team. There is some evidence to show creativity in the teaching and learning of RE but this needs to be further developed. Pupils are taught about other faiths and especially Judaism in an age appropriate way. The school has invested in a wide range of resources linked to the RECD such as Bibles. This ensures that there is a three year cycle of learning which does provide opportunities for achievement and good progression across the key stages. The structure planning and content of this school's RE curriculum and in lessons is good and thorough but lacking in creativity and opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas and talents.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is good in this school. From average attainment on entry most pupils leave with standards at or even above the national average therefore progress is equally judged to be good. The learning environment in the EYF is of a very high standard and has been well thought out and a wide range of resources bought to ensure that the youngest pupils get a very good start to their RE learning. The work produced in reception does not however reflect this rich environment and requires attention. A detailed scrutiny of books both in class and from the last academic year shows pupils are achieving well especially in their understanding of scripture from the Bible. They have detailed knowledge of scripture and acquire a very sound religious vocabulary that should stand them in good stead for the future. The school has a system of providing challenge for the more able by allowing the pupils to choose a 'one chilli' to a 'three chilli' harder challenge. There is evidence of impact in providing increased differentiation and outcomes of work but this need further refinement and developing to ensure higher standards for pupils of all abilities. Pupils do generally show engagement and enthusiasm in their lessons. Work seen from Lent 2016 by the then Year 5 pupils is of a high standard and should ensure a continuing rise in standards for the coming year.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is judged to be good. Not all classes were seen during the course of this inspection as the school has a policy of RE only being taught by Catholic teachers. Recruitment and retention of Catholic teachers has been a growing issue for the school in the last few years. The opportunities provided for the EYF pupils were of a high order and teaching by all staff was judged to be good in a stimulating environment. The use of outside spaces was well utilised by teachers and support staff in the early years. Some good and lively teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 where pupils were fully engaged in lessons and were enthusiastic learners. In Key Stage 2 pupils were more passive and there was a lot of reliance on teacher talk rather than pupils being actively engaged in learning. It was however early in the year and the topic being taught was complex for this age range. Catholic teachers' knowledge of scripture and theology is of a high order and clearly developing well for this school. Support staff were observed playing a key role in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school needs to review opportunities for non-Catholic teachers to be able to deliver RE lessons. Marking is good in every class seen and almost all classes adhere to the schools own

marking policy, this is a growing strength of the school. Differentiation is provided in terms of levels of challenge of pupils but is not always reflected in outcomes seen and is an area for further development. New teachers are being supported in the planning and delivery of RE lessons by the RE leader. Monitoring of work is done once a term by the RE leader and direct quality of teaching is monitored once a year by members of the RE leadership team. Governors are also involved in this process and take part in learning walks and lesson observations in classes. They are well informed about standards of teaching and learning in the school.

The leadership and management of religious education

are good

Leadership and management of RE are good in this school. The head teacher in particular plays a key role in driving school improvement and is fully committed to the subject. She is being supported in school by the deputy head and the RE leader. The RE leader plays a key role in managing planning and assessment of RE. These three members of the RE leadership team also teach RE in the classes where teachers are not Catholic. The school has had good support and guidance in implementing its new curriculum and units of work. Senior staff regularly attend diocesan moderation meetings of work and also share good practice with local schools. The self-evaluation provided by the school is a well written document and is accurate about acknowledging the schools strengths and areas for development. Two members of the leadership team have attended the Applied Theology course at the diocese. The governing body are well informed and provide a good balance of challenge and support to the school. The governing body have an RE sub-committee and hold termly meetings as well as conducting regular visits to the school.

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

- Raise the standards of teaching and learning across the school in RE
- Widen opportunities for creativity in the curriculum by using for example art, drama, ICT and music to enhance pupils of all abilities in their learning, engagement and enthusiasm in lessons

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The main improvement since the last inspection has been in the role of governors and the RE committee. This examines and supports all aspects of the Catholic life of the school and has played a key role in driving improvement and progress within the school.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

RE is clearly at the core of the curriculum of this school. The school motto is well known by all pupils and they proudly proclaim to visitors: “In God we are, we know, we act”, this is central to the life of the school. 10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE across the whole school year but not weekly. Some of the lessons timetabled are very long for the ages of the pupils and the school needs to review this. A generous annual budget is allocated and extra resources provided as when needed to deliver the RE curriculum. Catholic teachers have mostly very good subject knowledge of religious education in accordance with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for England and Wales. New teachers to the school are being well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education and are encouraged to study for higher Catholic qualifications. The accommodation is tidy and well maintained indoors. The “Prayer Room” on the first floor of the school is beautifully set out and a great asset to the school. Outdoors there are no areas for worship or liturgy to take place in the school’s extensive grounds; the governors would like to develop this aspect. RE displays and prayer corners are in place in all classrooms with mainly key words being prominent to enhance pupils writing. The school clearly places a high emphasis on the centrality of the Catholic faith to its mission and life

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

is outstanding

This is a major strength of the school and is judged to be outstanding. Collective worship, prayer life and Eucharistic liturgies are strengths of this school. The local parish priest who is also a governor and serves on the RE committee is a frequent and always welcome visitor to the school. Opportunities are plentiful for small and whole school liturgies, reflective prayer groups, celebration of the Sacraments and regular assemblies. The school is fortunate to serve three parishes so visits to local churches for Mass are arranged on a regular basis throughout the year. Reconciliation is also a key feature of the daily life of this school and pupils are greatly helped in developing an informed conscience. Pupils in the EYF are introduced to a rich and wide variety of traditional and more reflective prayers and get off to a very good start in their prayer life. The work seen by the current Year 6 in planning a class liturgy was of a very high order and in many ways was exemplary. The school has plans to extend this practice to more junior classes in the future.

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

are good

This area is judged to be good. It is not yet outstanding because the theology underpinning the Common Good is not yet embedded in pupils’ understanding and also opportunities are being missed to be of greater service around the school. The school is rightly proud of its support for an extensive and wide range of charities both locally and overseas. Examples mentioned by pupils were MacMillan Cancer, Cafod and the St Vincent de Paul Society. The school is also proud of the work of

their Minnie Vinnies and were busy collecting food for the Harvest appeal during the course of this inspection. The school is building fruitful links with a local Jewish faith school and mutual visits have taken place to encourage respect for people of other faiths. Pupils are aware of a school in Ghana that they support but are not sure about what they are currently doing in this partnership. Equally they are unsure about the theology that underpins the Common Good and this is an area for development. Pupils are given opportunities to be of service around the school via Eco and Sports Councils, but again opportunities are missed to help with and establish safer behaviour routines, safety aspects in the playground and in supporting the younger pupils in their learning. This is also an area for development.

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

are outstanding

This area is judged to be outstanding as all key areas are firmly established and appear to be sustainable for the future. The school attends all the key diocesan events throughout the year and participates in diocesan and deanery moderation of work. The school avails of training provided by the RE advisers among others. Parish links are very strong and mention must be made of the choir who not only sing in church but also sing for the Over 55s Club from St Alban's parish. Good relationships at all levels between school and the three parishes are well established and mutually beneficial. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and the leadership of the head in particular. A questionnaire returned by parents expressed appreciation for the Catholic life of the school and the education that their children were receiving. All partnerships are judged to be outstanding in this close Catholic community.

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

are outstanding

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are judged to be outstanding. There is a very strong commitment at all levels to promote the Catholic life and ethos of the school. This commitment is quite clearly shared by everyone involved in the life of the school and shines through to the pupils in their daily lives. Governors via their RE committee play a critical role in supporting and challenging the head and her RE leadership team in promoting the highest standards for this school. The school reflects carefully on its practice and ambition is equally evident at all levels of leadership. There is a clear vision and effective shared planning to ensure that the high standards of the Catholic life of the school are maintained and strengthened into the future.

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

- Develop further an understanding of the theology underpinning the Common Good and also give the older pupils more opportunities to be of service to the school especially in the playground settings
- Develop an outside area for prayer and worship to even further enhance the schools outstanding practice existing indoors

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic Primary school in the locality of Barnet.
- The school serves the parishes of St Mary's, East Finchley, St Philip's, Church End and St. Alban's, North Finchley.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 96%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2% and from other faiths is 2 %.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 67%.
- There are 14 % of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 2 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is above average
- There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 45 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (21%).

Department for Education Number	302 3501
Unique Reference Number	101311
Local Authority	Barnet

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	212
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fiona Kerin
Headteacher	Miss Barbara Costa
Telephone number	0208 346 1681
Website	www.ololbarnetschool.org.uk
Email address	office@olol.barnetmail.net
Date of previous inspection	April 2011
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Outstanding
The Catholic life of the school	Outstanding

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 7 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mr Sean Flood

Lead Inspector

Mrs Theresa O'Sullivan

Associate Inspector

Mr Michael Ross

Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

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