

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infant School

Dollis Hill Ave, London NW2 6EU

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 12 October 2016



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The school has focused on the character and needs of the local community very closely and this focus is reflected in its challenging religious education programme, accurately mapped to the Curriculum Directory.
- From Early Years Foundation Stage to end of Key Stage 1, pupil progress and achievement in religious education are outstanding.
- The programme is very effective in helping pupils know and understand the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. The teachers meet regularly to plan their delivery of the curriculum and have very high expectations of their pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons, and are fully involved in their own learning.
- The school tracks and monitors the progress of pupils in religious education very effectively.
- The quality of leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. The governors take constant interest in its progress and look to support and challenge the leadership team in every possible way.
- The quality of art and display in the school buildings and surroundings promotes good involvement in religious education.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The united staff witness helps the pupils in the practice and appreciation of their faith.
- The place of religious education is clearly at the core of the curriculum, informing the breadth of teaching in the school.
- The partnership between parents, school and parish is outstanding. Relationship with the local parish is excellent.
- The experience of Catholic worship, prayer and liturgy is rich and varied and is of the highest quality.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to respond to the needs of others and the staff are very generous in their active involvement, encouraging the pupils by their example.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- The mission statement informs school life in every way, in its teaching and learning, daily routine and vision.
- The headteacher and governors have high expectations for the school and inspire the staff and pupils to seek excellence as an outstanding Catholic school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection report recommended that the school should adopt a whole school tracking system for religious education; this has been fully achieved. Further the school has committed resources to ensuring the art and environment of the school reflects its catholicity and this has contributed to a deeper awareness of religious education being at the core of what the school is about.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding. The school has adapted and developed its religious education teaching programmes to better meet the needs of its changing and changed pupil profile. It also aims to build a higher level of expectation of and better outcomes for the pupils by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 1. By adapting and adding to published programmes, topics and units of work provide a developmental programme which is outstanding. This programme is clear about where and how the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) themes and topics are included, and it fully meets the requirements of the RECD. In addition resources have been developed to enhance teaching stories from the Old and New Testaments by 'Godly Play'. It was noticeable how broader curriculum areas such as role play, art, design technology and ICT featured very effectively in the delivery of religious education. By tailoring their planning for pupils' needs, staff are able to provide a very good level of challenge for the pupils. Teaching about other faiths is done in an age-appropriate fashion across the school, developing knowledge, understanding and respect of different belief systems. In a planned annual programme pupils get the opportunity to visit a place of worship of another faith or hear a representative of another faith come to talk to them about what their faith means to them.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Considering pupils' starting points in EYFS, which are below average, pupil progress by the end of Year 2 is rapid and sustained. Analysis of the data shows that at least 88% achieved Level 2 or better and 26% achieved Level 3 in 2016. This excellent progress on the part of pupils is closely monitored. There are systems in place which clearly show progression from EYFS to Year 2. The tracking system that the school has devised assists planning and informs teaching and learning. It enables teachers to make accurate judgements about the level a child has reached and the next step to take. Internal moderation takes place termly and, based on excellent involvement in borough and diocesan moderation meetings, teachers are confident in their judgements regarding pupil progress. Pupils display a thirst for learning and are active participants in their learning. Their voice is taken into account when planning and developing the curriculum and ensures that there is a rigour in matching next step planning with specific pupil profiles. Pupils are engaged in their own learning and have a role in the setting of targets. The pupils' understanding of the use of religious language is excellent. Parents commented to inspectors that their children come home using religious language and with insight into teachings of the Catholic faith which they find remarkable.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Through both the scrutiny of books and the observed teaching on the day of inspection the evidence shows an outstanding quality of teaching. Teachers are well prepared for the topics they are delivering and have high expectations that the pupils will tackle them to the best of their ability. The

culture of the school contains a strong use of targets for pupils and pupils knew the steps they were following to reach the targets. The commitment of the staff to ensuring the pupils make very good progress towards achieving the targets was evident. Staff meet to talk through each unit at beginning and shared planning, assessment and moderation time are built into the school's termly structures. The staffing structure is strategic in that it ensures staff are appropriately supported and there is open dialogue between staff which develops teamwork. The school is implicitly monitoring teaching and staff development but needs to be more explicit in its recording and analysis. It is notable that support staff are involved in the planning meetings and are thus able to provide very effective assistance to the teachers in the classroom context.

The leadership and management of religious education

are outstanding

The outstanding leadership and management of religious education is characterised by joint promotion of the subject on the part of the head and the religious education coordinator. The senior leadership team (SLT) and the governors have supported the capacity that has been built up in staff confidence and expertise to deliver outstanding religious education teaching. The religious education coordinator has a vision and commitment to the subject which she shares effectively with all staff, and is assiduous in ensuring newer staff are inducted well into the programme. She leads the triangulation of evidence of pupil progress based on monitoring of teaching, learning walks, pupil voice and scrutiny of books. The budget for the subject is higher than that of the other core subjects and indicates the emphasis placed on it. Based on the very comprehensive and detailed knowledge and insight on the progress pupils are making in religious education on the part of all members of the SLT, the leadership and management of religious education are agile and proactive in taking pupils forward.

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

- The monitoring of the teaching of religious education should be developed to a higher level of analysis and outcome to enable better insight into the progress being made.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection report recommended that school should develop further links with the local, wider and international communities especially through the use of ICT. The school has succeeded in developing wider links with different communities, including visits to forge links with schools in Poland and Czech Republic and ICT has been fully integrated in its communication. The school has analysed closely the changes in the families and accommodation patterns in its immediate neighbourhood and has taken constructive steps in planning for the new demands that it faces in serving its locality. Through display, art, playground decoration and creative use of its limited space to develop a garden of peace, the school has communicated well its commitment to its catholicity

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The school has demonstrated that it places religious education at the core of its curriculum in an outstanding way. Already mentioned are the steps it has taken to develop the environment which speaks of its Catholic life. The school gives the 10% curriculum time to religious education as expected by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at Key Stage 1 and 20% to EYFS. It provides a generous budget to religious education, providing not only up to date programmes and teaching resources, but also improvements to the layout of the school which specifically exemplify its catholicity. The RE coordinator is an active member of the Brent Catholic Schools cluster sharing resources, good practice and moderation. The local parish priest visits regularly and offers support and guidance to the staff ensuring they have the capacity to maintain RE at the core of the curriculum. The governors are fully committed to seeing the curriculum of the school being founded with religious education at its core. The leadership team of the school provide unremitting support and guidance to the teaching of RE and are always ready to promote the high status of RE in the life of the school. The school takes special steps to ensure newly qualified staff and staff new to Catholic education are inducted very well into the values of the school, and in particular the fundamental place of religious education.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are central to the life of Our Lady of Grace Infants School and take place regularly both at whole school and at class level. Its provision is an outstanding element in the life of the school. The school mission statement is regularly referred to in prayer 'We are learning to grow and love like Jesus.' Pupils plan and lead worship sessions within their class, enabling prayer opportunities for all. Music is integral to all worship sessions. Scriptures included reflect the liturgical year and this was evident in the harvest assembly that was celebrated, where the Gospel reading of the seeds was shared. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through the excellent opportunities they are given for quiet reflection and spontaneous prayer. A prayer area has been developed as a reflection area for Key Stage 1. Each pupil has the opportunity in the course of a year to take home a prayer bag and parents are offered workshops to support the prayer life of their family. Parents interviewed spoke highly of this particular encouragement offered them. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and says Mass at special liturgical occasions as well as at other times.

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

are outstanding

The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to know and understand the Gospel call to justice and service from a local, national and international context. The pupils actively engage in service to those in need. This engagement is carried forward through the development of Mini Vinnies, Play Leaders, buddy systems and the School Council. Pupils are helped to understand how forms of service need to take into account the particular characteristics of different groups by learning about a different country each month, along with its particular culture and tradition. At a more concrete level, there is support for a local food bank, visits to a nearby residential home twice a year, and collections for Cricklewood Homeless Concern. Staff set an outstanding example through their support of local charities through activities such as sponsored walks or runs. Pupils are given background guidance on the nature of different charities to help their involvement in choosing which charities to support and why. This active involvement and service needs to be further embedded through pupils articulating their understanding with greater clarity and confidence.

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

is outstanding

The school has developed very good relationships with its parents and they are engaged very constructively in the venture of building and maintaining the school's Catholic ethos and outreach. The school organises home visits, maintains an open door policy encouraging collaboration and cooperation. It was specially noted that the school's website is available in just over a hundred languages, catering well for its diverse entry. It is a welcoming community, accustomed to incorporating the new pupils and families that regularly come to it. It is part of the school thinking to look to 'home-school-parish' relationships. The parish priest is a weekly visitor and the school enables better participation in Sunday liturgy by sending the pupils home midweek with the 'Wednesday Word' so that the readings of the coming Sunday are already flagged. There are very good relationships with the diocese, with staff taking part appropriately in diocesan training and celebrations both in the deanery and in the Cathedral. Diocesan advisers visit the school and their suggestions are acted on comprehensively.

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

is outstanding

Leadership and management are outstandingly effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The governors and SLT are relentless in finding ways to ensure that the Catholic life of the school is central to all strategy and decision making. Its Catholic identity pervades all areas of school life. The welcome given to the parish priest as well as constant promotion of involvement of pupils in the life of the parish are evident. Teaching and learning across the curriculum is informed by the school's mission statement. Regular professional development is arranged for the staff both to learn more about and reflect on the Catholic nature of the school. The parents appreciation of the catholicity of the school was a notable element in the questionnaire received back from over 90% of the parents.

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

- Develop further the work of assisting pupils to be more articulate in describing what their beliefs are and how these beliefs lead on to sharing with the poor of the world.

Information about this school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic infants school in the locality of Brent.
- The school serves the parish of St Mary and St Andrew, Dollis Hill. The proportion of pupils, including nursery, who are baptised Catholic is 93.5%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 5% and from other faiths is 1%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 70%.
- There are 16% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom four 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 well above average.
- There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals, however other sources of data reveal levels of deprivation which are twice the national average.
- Twenty four pupils receive the Pupil Premium (10.5%).

Department for Education Number	304/3510
Unique Reference Number	101547
Local Authority	Brent

Type of school	Primary Infant
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4-8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	228
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Lee-Ann Frampton Anderson
Headteacher	Mrs Philomena Bourne
Telephone number	020 8450 6757
Website	www.ologinfants.brent.sch.uk
Email address	admin@ologinfants.brent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2011
Grade from previous inspection	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 1 assembly and a number of acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils, parish priest, parents 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.

Deacon Anthony Clark

Lead Inspector

Mrs Robina Maher

Associate Inspector

Miss Tracey Peters

Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

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