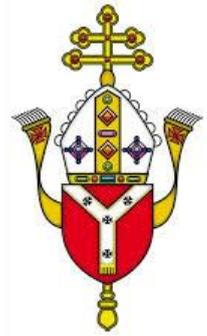


Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Priory Close, Green Road, Southgate NI4 4AT

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 18 November 2016



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education requires improvement

- There are serious weaknesses at all levels in the leadership and management of RE.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is not well planned for or well delivered in almost all classrooms.
- Teaching requires improvement in Key Stage 1 and 2. The pupils' books are sparse and untidily presented
- Differentiation is limited Pupils are not being challenged in line with their high abilities.
- The school is not academically selective; however pupils mostly enter the school with high levels of attainment and leave in line with national average therefore progress is equally judged to require improvement.
- The school has only recently started to assess pupils in line with diocesan requirements and therefore there is little evidence of tracking the progress of individual pupils as they go through school.
- The schools own self-evaluation is very weak, highly inaccurate and governors had not been part of the process.

Classroom religious education has the following strengths

- The Early Years Foundation provides a good start for the younger children in the school in both classes.
- Pupils are well behaved, are highly articulate and eager to learn when given the right opportunity.
- The accommodation and buildings are of a high standard.

B. The Catholic life of the school requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school require improvement at all levels.
- 10% of curriculum time is not currently being devoted to religious education as required.
- Opportunities for prayer and liturgy are provided but they are limited.
- Pupils' chances to plan and lead their own liturgies and acts of worship are equally limited.
- Pupils are generous in supporting charity work but are unsure about the theology that underpins it and equally unsure about recent developments such as the Year of Mercy and the call of Pope Francis to be of service.
- Links between the home, the school and the parish are not strong and the parent survey emphasised this point. Parents would like more information in how to support their child's Catholic life and learning.

The Catholic life of the school has the following strengths

- Pupils have been very generous in supporting the work of Cafod in Bolivia and recently raised a large amount of money for this charity.
- All religions and those of no faith are well respected in this school.
- Pupils are reverent and respectful when given the chance to pray and reflect.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The main area of improvement has been in the introduction of a new scheme of work in RE.

The content of classroom religious education requires improvement

The content of the religious education curriculum for this Catholic school 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 being planned for by the religious education leader. However, the scheme has only recently been introduced and is not widely known or understood by all staff. All work provided is the same and as a result lacks differentiation or challenge for higher ability pupils. There is little evidence to show creativity or use of scripture in the teaching and learning of RE.

Pupils are being taught about other faiths, especially Judaism. The structure, planning and content of this school's RE curriculum is weak and requires improvement.

Pupil achievement in religious education requires improvement

Pupil achievement requires improvement in this school. Pupils are highly articulate and do show engagement and enthusiasm in their lessons but this is not being matched in their achievement. The school is not academically selective however from high attainment on entry most pupils leave with standards probably at the national average; therefore progress is equally judged to require improvement. This judgement was reached from a range of evidence including a work scrutiny of books and discussions with Year 6 pupils. The school has only just started to use diocesan attainment targets to record pupil progress and was not able to provide any detailed evidence of progress or achievement. Record keeping on pupils' progress is very basic and lacks any detail to support the development of RE within the school. The school does not provide challenge for the more able pupils and in every class all pupils were given the same task. A detailed work scrutiny also showed a lack of differentiation and the only difference seen was by outcome. This scrutiny also showed that the presentation, handwriting and coverage are not good enough for pupils of this ability. Pupils are also not being given the chance to produce longer pieces of extended writing or do their own research and this needs addressing. The learning environment in the EYF both indoors and outside is of a high standard and has been well structured and so the youngest pupils get a good start to their RE learning. Behaviour is of a high standard in the classrooms.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

Teaching requires improvement. Teaching on the whole lacked challenge and did not give pupils enough time to respond to questions or to write at length. Teaching tasks were all pitched at one level and questions were not matched to the high abilities of these pupils. Scripture and Bibles were seen being used in only one class. Teachers have limited subject knowledge of religious education in accordance with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for England and Wales. The recruitment and retention of Catholic teachers has been a growing concern for the school in the last few years. Monitoring of work and quality of teaching lacks rigour and is not systematic enough. Opportunities provided for the EYF pupils were good and teaching was judged to be good in a lively and stimulating environment. The outside spaces were well utilised by both teachers and support staff in the early years.

The leadership and management of religious education**requires improvement**

Leadership and management of RE requires improvement in this school. The school has recently been through a period of transition and turbulence in its leadership and this is evident in the outcomes for the school and its pupils. The school has no substantive head until the new year and no deputy. The RE leader has only been in post a short while and has not had the time to make the impact or changes required. There have also been other staffing issues and challenges that have impacted on the leadership and management of RE in the school.

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

- Review the leadership and management of RE as a priority.
- Review curriculum provision and provide CPD for all staff so that they know more about what they are actually teaching.
- Provide differentiation and appropriately challenging tasks that match the high ability of these pupils. This includes the presentation of pupils work
- Introduce a rigorous and regular system to assess pupil's achievement and progress.
- Raise the standards of teaching and learning across the school in RE.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has increased teaching hours for RE but this still does not meet diocesan requirements of 10% of teaching time. The school is supporting Cafod in a meaningful way.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

requires improvement

RE is not currently at the core of the curriculum of this school. The accommodation is of a very high standard, both indoors and outside. The building is clean and modern and classrooms are bright and airy. However, 10% of curriculum time is not being devoted to RE in at least half the classes seen, which is a requirement from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Many RE lessons are timetabled for the end of the day or even Friday afternoons. Some of the lessons timetabled are lengthy for the ages of the pupils and the school needs to review this. An appropriate annual budget is allocated to deliver the RE curriculum. RE displays and prayer corners are in place in all classrooms, some are quite basic, however.

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

requires improvement

The prayer life of the school requires improvement. Mass is held at the school and at other times the Catholic children of the school are taken to the local church, for example on Holy Days. Prayers are said in all classes; however the only prayer seen during this inspection was the lunchtime prayer and in an assembly. Prayers and responses are not well known by pupils and opportunities are being missed to involve them more in planning liturgies and celebrations both in school and in the parish.

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

requires improvement

This area requires development. The school has recently raised a large sum of money to support Cafod in its work in Bolivia and pupils are rightly proud of this. They are however unsure about the theology that underpins the Common Good and this is an area for development. For example they were unsure about the Year of Mercy and were unaware of key aspects of this year such as the Corporal Works of Mercy. Work around this has been limited as was pupil knowledge of Pope Francis' Laudato Si document. For pupils of such high abilities and who are so articulate opportunities for learning and human flourishing are being missed. Pupils are given opportunities to be of service around the school but again these are limited.

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

requires improvement

This area is judged to require improvement in all areas. The school attends some diocesan events throughout the year and has recently started to participate in diocesan and deanery moderation of

work. The diocesan RE adviser has worked hard to support the school. Parish links are being developed for the future benefit of both school and parish.

A questionnaire returned by parents expressed appreciation for the Catholic life and work of the school but a high percentage of parents expressed some disquiet about different aspects of the school, their main concern being the lack of information and partnership with the school and how to support their child's learning at home.

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

requires improvement

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are judged to be requiring improvement. The transitions and recent changes in the school have clearly had a detrimental effect on the leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school. This needs to be addressed as a matter of some urgency and made a key priority for the school. Governance has also been weak. For example, the school was unable to produce minutes of the governing body during this inspection. At the time of this inspection there was no chair of the governing body or RE link governor. This area is being addressed in the near future. The governors had not seen the school's RE self-evaluation document which is a key document for any school. This self-evaluation document lacks coherence and is inaccurate in every one of its own judgements. The two governors interviewed recognised the challenge that faced them and looked forward to making improvements in the future. Leadership and management are fragile at all levels and require improvement.

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

- Draw up an action plan to improve all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. This should include:
 - ensuring that RE is a core subject by giving 10% of curriculum time and revising its place on the timetable
 - strengthening the governing body as a matter of urgency; electing a new chair and nominating an RE Link governor
 - engaging parents to enable them to support their children's home learning.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry, (apart from Year 6 which has two classes), independent Catholic primary school in the locality of Enfield.
- The school is not attached to a parish though pupils often receive the sacraments at Christ the King, Cockfosters, whether they are within the parish or live in another parish.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is not known as the school does not record this information. 39% of parents consider their children to be Catholic.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 43% and from other faiths is 18%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 39%.
- There are 0.5 % of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 1 has a statement of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is below average.

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| Department for Education Number | 308/6056 |
| Unique Reference Number | 102064 |
| Local Authority | Independent |

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Independent |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 186 |
| The appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Vacant |
| Interim Headteacher | Mrs Margaret O'Connor |
| Telephone number | 0208 449 8336 |
| Website | www.vitaetpax.co.uk |
| Email address | info@vitaetpax.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | November 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.

- 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 Sue Cunningham

Associate Inspector

Mrs Norah Flatley

Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

Published by the Diocese of Westminster

This publication is available at: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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