

Divine Saviour Catholic Primary

Broomfield Rise, Abbots Langley WD5 0HW

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 24 March 2017



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The quality of religious education is both creative and dynamic.
- The religious education curriculum is fully compliant with the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- The religious education leader is an excellent practitioner and role model for the whole school community.
- Teaching is typically outstanding throughout the school. This has ensured that pupils make excellent progress over time and learn exceptionally well.
- Teaching is creative and inspiring and engages pupils in their learning.
- Marking is consistent and enables pupils to be confident about how to improve their work.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and demonstrates a secure knowledge of strengths and areas for development.
- Work in religious education is moderated regularly both internally and at diocesan level.
- Pupils are confident, articulate learners and speak with enthusiasm about their learning.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons, and are fully involved in their own learning.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in religious education given their starting points when they join the school.
- The curriculum provides many excellent age-appropriate opportunities for learning about other faiths.
- Attainment is at least as good as other core subjects.
- Governors are fully involved in the development of religious education.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Religious education is at the core of this Catholic school.
- Innovative leadership ensures that recent improvements are sustainable for the future of the school.
- 10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE lessons, which meets and the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- The outstanding religious education leader is the driving force behind the engaging, creative and rich experience of Catholic tradition on offer to pupils.
- Worship and prayer are a central part of school and intricately woven through its daily life.
- Pupils are well able to plan, prepare and worship at growing levels of maturity as they make their way up the school.
- The sacramental life of the pupils is nurtured through the partnership with the parish.
- Staff prayer is an everyday part of school life.
- The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to know and understand the Gospel call to justice and service from a local, national and international perspective.
- Governors and leaders at all levels are outstanding in their support and guidance of the school.
- Partnerships with the diocese, the parish and above all parents are very strong.
- Governors are well established in the parish and able to evaluate the impact of the school at this level.
- Staff are well supported by senior leaders through mentoring and ongoing in service. A high proportion of staff have or are preparing to embark on additional qualifications in Catholic education.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since June 2015, a new and dynamic leadership team has led to significant improvements in the quality of religious education at Divine Saviour. The inspirational religious education leader has had a significant impact on the teaching and learning across the school. The quality and stability of the staff team is now embedded with permanent members of Catholic staff. Regular in-service training has led to increased teacher confidence and understanding and the highly effective induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers has ensured that pupils are receiving high quality religious education (RE) lessons.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The religious education curriculum is fully compliant with the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and is well delivered through the Agreed Understanding of the Levels of Attainment in Religious Education. Teaching on other faiths is well delivered and further work is planned in this area. This work is supported by visits made and visitors received to ensure pupils encounter other local faith communities. The well-planned use of resources is relevant and appropriate to meet the needs and challenge to pupils across all phases. Through very high expectations there is a clear and shared vision of the importance of promoting religious literacy among pupils. New staff are provided with a high level of support from the able RE leader.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

The school has a robust and rigorous system of tracking progress through the Levels of Attainment and the Agreed Understandings. There is evidence of an improving trend over the past three years, where pupils make effective and, in some cases, rapid progress. This improvement is in line with other core subjects. The ongoing monitoring cycle is well supported through cross-deanery moderation and planning that takes place between the school and their partner federation school. Moderation booklets produced between the two schools provide a secure support tool for staff. During lesson observations, discussions with the pupils provided evidence of how they know and understand their targets, with one pupil explaining, 'my teacher marks my work and asks me questions which make me think more.' The pupils clearly demonstrated a love of RE lessons and a thirst for learning more about their Catholic faith. Pupils are confident at completing their own self-assessments at the start and finish of each topic. This was clearly evidenced in workbooks and has enabled pupils to take ownership of their learning and reflect on their religious journey throughout the school year.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching is never less than good and in many cases is outstanding throughout the school. This has ensured that pupils make excellent progress over time and learn exceptionally well. This was clearly evident in lessons, pupil workbooks and the school's rigorous and detailed moderation samples. Pupils get a very good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation in a bright and stimulating setting. Support staff play an important role across the school ensuring that pupils with additional needs are well catered for and generally contributing to the learning of pupils in all classes. Reference to scripture is used very effectively to engage pupils' interest and enhance learning. The new marking policy ensures clear and consistent marking across year groups, with constructive feedback given to pupils; consequently, higher levels of attainment in religious education are evident throughout the school. Higher order questioning is used to stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding and this allows them to reflect on the deeper significance and of religious belief and practice. Pupils really enjoy their RE lessons. A pupil in Year 5 said, "I really like RE lessons because

they help to make our Catholic beliefs stronger.” Planning is very systematic and detailed to take account of pupils’ prior learning. Resources throughout the school are good. Displays are creative and imaginative and there is detailed attention to vocabulary and language development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education

Is outstanding

The leadership of religious education at Divine Saviour is outstanding and is driven by the vision and faith commitment of the leadership team. The innovative and creative leadership of the executive headteacher and the dynamic RE leader has led to excellence in all areas of religious education. Leadership at all levels within the school community share their dynamic and creative vision for religious education, which has ensured that religious education is the strength of the school. The RE leader is well equipped to play a leading role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning of religious education and evaluating the Catholic life of the school whilst making the most of training opportunities provided by the diocese including regular attendance at religious education subject leader meetings. Carefully planned training, teachers’ outstanding subject knowledge and on-going assessment techniques ensure there is an excellent level of challenge for the more able pupils. This ensures that all staff are fully able to support pupils in religious education lessons. The school leadership is fully committed to enabling staff to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies qualification and support them in this process. Governors are regular visitors, well informed and fully committed to the school and know it well. All new staff and newly qualified teachers are well guided and supported to deliver highly effective religious education for all pupils.

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

- Continue to further develop training for teaching assistants to enhance their ability to support learning in religious education lessons.
- Share the outstanding practice developed within Divine Saviour Catholic School across the deanery.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The new and dynamic leadership team have ensured that the Catholic life of the school is at the heart of the school's work. The school have been on a rapid journey and this has been underpinned by the willingness of the governing body to think and act strategically. This has been supported by their vision for Catholic education and to secure the long-term future for the families of Divine Saviour Catholic School.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The school fully recognises religious education as a core subject, which is given the highest priority and meets the 10% requirement of the Bishops' Conference. The governing body is fully committed to sustaining outstanding provision. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are very well supported by the exceptional RE Leader. All teachers and support staff are well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education. Displays and prayer focus areas are prominent and of good quality around the school. Religious education contributes widely to pupils' personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The excellent commitment by the governing body ensures the ongoing professional development of all staff. A number have, or are preparing to embark on the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies programme with one staff member being supported to undertake an MA in Pastoral Theology. Leaders, governors and the parish priest offer very effective support to staff so that they are able to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are at the heart of the school and its mission, from the daily prayer to the pupils singing. The strength of Catholic tradition is evident to all who enter Divine Saviour. There is independent child-led worship, which is planned and led by pupils with a growing understanding and maturity as they move up the school. Pupils experience a richness of Catholic tradition of prayer, worship and the celebration of the Eucharist by celebrating whole school Masses at key times throughout the liturgical year. The new parish priest has supported the school to play a bigger role in the parish and this is continuing to grow. During the inspection a whole school assembly focused on being 'called to serve the sick.' Pupils were confident in sharing the meaning behind this and how they were going to implement this as classes. Singing is an integral part of the school's prayer life and pupils told the inspectors, 'We love to sing!' The sacramental life of the pupils is nurtured through the partnership with the parish and the access to the church. Pupils in Key Stage 2 receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation during Advent and Lent. They follow the traditional liturgical events, including the recitation of the rosary and Stations of the Cross. Inspectors attended a moving rehearsal for the upcoming Passion play by Year 4 pupils. Staff prayer is an everyday part of school life and a school prayer session is held weekly before school. The richness of the prayer life on offer both internally and externally reflects the warmth and calm, which is woven throughout all aspects of the school day.

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

is 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 perspective. The pupils are aware that their school reflects a diverse community both culturally and socially. They actively engage in service to

those in need and this engagement is carried forward through the roles of Mini Vinnies, buddy systems, School Council and the Chaplaincy Team. The pupils clearly understand the theology that underpins their contribution to the Common Good and one pupil told the inspectors, “Jesus tells us how to act, as he said to love one another as He did by dying on the cross for us.” Pupils regularly revisit the Corporal Acts of Mercy and principles of Catholic social teaching through assemblies and liturgies with a permanent reminder on the ‘Doors of Mercy’ entering the school hall. Pupils support a number of local and diocesan charities as well as fundraising for their partner parish in Tanzania. They are committed to supporting fundraising efforts and are actively involved in planning these events. They actively engage in acts of service and have an excellent understanding of why they are doing it. During assembly on the day of inspection, pupils were able to articulate how they were going to support the ‘call to serve the sick.’ Behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding across the school. Pupils from the youngest ages act independently and responsibly and demonstrate a real pride in their school.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is outstanding

The partnership with parents is strong and typified by the very high parental participation at the assembly and Mothers’ Day liturgy on the day of the inspection. These close relationships have resulted in a close Catholic community that is supported on its faith journey. A recent parent questionnaire showed that parents are overwhelmingly happy with the school and what it offers them. A parent at the morning assembly told inspectors that the school “is very much a Catholic family.” The school website is at an early stage and the ‘Catholic Life of the School’ section could be further developed to support the partnership with parents. The very strong relationship with the parish priest is evident when talking to pupils, parents and staff, who value the support he offers. The school attends key diocesan training and special events and has forged strong links with other Catholic schools for training, support and sharing good practice.

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

is outstanding

The clear vision and determination of the governing body, in partnership with the executive headteacher and dynamic RE Leader, ensures outstanding leadership and management for all in this school. The school has made rapid progress over the last year and strategic planning has ensured that the school continues to move forward and is able to sustain its highly effective systems and procedures. The accurate self-evaluation is evidence of how the school is determined to sustain their effective practice, whilst identifying their action points for continued development and improvement. The headteacher is an executive headteacher of two schools but has ensured that through his ability to empower leaders, the school can continue to flourish. He is very ably supported by a dedicated governing body and senior leadership team who continue to ensure that the Catholic life of the school is central to all strategy and decision making.

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

- To develop and enhance the use of space within the school to support prayer, worship and liturgy.
- Further develop the school website to ensure that the Catholic life of the school is accessible to the wider community.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Watford.
- The school serves the parishes of St Saviour's, Abbots Langley and Our Lady Mother of the Saviour, Chipperfield.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 89.33%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 6.67 % and from other faiths is 0.4 %.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 86.7 %.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 8.2 % of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 3 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 below average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well below average.
- There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 26 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (11.5 %).

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| Department for Education Number | 919 3410 |
| Unique Reference Number | 117485 |
| Local Authority | Hertfordshire |

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 -11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 225 |
| The appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Kevin Butler |
| Executive Headteacher | Mr Stephen Wheatley |
| Telephone number | 01923 265607 |
| Website | www.divinesaviour.herts.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@divinesaviour.herts.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 17 January 2012 |
| Grades from previous inspection: | |
| Classroom religious education | Good |
| The Catholic life of the school | Good |

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 6 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 2 assemblies 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 Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

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