

St Anthony's Preparatory School

90 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London, NW3 6NP

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 16 June 2017



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The behaviour of pupils both in lessons and around the school is of a very high standard and parents should be proud of the conduct of their boys.
- Pupils are articulate, polite and eager to show their work to visitors.
- The religious education leadership team provides effective leadership of the subject and have responded well to guidance offered by the Diocese of Westminster this year. They are fully committed to attaining high standards.
- Teaching was good in all classes seen.
- Pupils get a good start to their school life in the Reception class where there is a secure and nurturing environment.
- Progress overall in the school is judged to be good.
- The religious literacy of the pupils is good in all classes and their verbal responses to questions are of a high standard.
- Standards of achievement in Years 7 and 8 are very high with some exceptional results being achieved at Year 8.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is not high enough in comparison to other core subjects.
- There is an over reliance on worksheets in some classrooms, and, as a result, a lack of challenge in some lessons for the most able pupils.
- Opportunities for extended writing and research are limited.
- The use of Bibles is not sufficiently developed.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- The headteacher is ambitious to develop the Catholic life of the school and is passionately committed to this aim.
- The Pastoral Board provides valuable support and challenge to the school and is resolute in preserving the integrity of its Catholic life.
- The school is well maintained and is clearly a Catholic school as evidenced in its displays and artwork. Classrooms are well set out with prayer corners in all classrooms.
- Prayer and worship are strong in the school and there are liturgies provided across all key stages.
- Partnership with the Diocese of Westminster is good; it provides very effective support to the school. Links with the local parish are especially strong. Parents are mostly appreciative of the work of the school.
- The school raises considerable sums of money for Catholic charities at home and around the world and parents are very generous in their support.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- The school is not currently compliant with the Bishops' Conference requirement that 10% of curriculum time be devoted to religious education.
- There are limited opportunities for parents to attend assemblies and liturgies in school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the previous inspection report the school was asked to encourage senior management and teachers to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS). The school is committed to this and some teachers have registered for this course. This work is still developing within the school, owing to changes in personnel and time constraints. The school was also asked to use the levels of attainment in assessing religious education (RE). This area of assessment is also being developed and the school is eager to refine its practice in this area.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of classroom religious education is good. The school currently uses as its core scheme for Years 1 to 6 a published scheme of work. The *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* forms the basis of the content of religious education within the school. The four areas of study are understood by the school and identified in the programmes of study. This is especially true in Years 7 to 8 where pupils follow a different syllabus for Religious Studies and use resources they have developed themselves. There is some evidence of creativity within the curriculum especially in the use of drama. The curriculum is age appropriate and does aim to ensure progression and development as pupils progress. The school has also recognised some limitations with its curriculum delivery and is eager to explore and make changes to its curriculum for Years 1 to 6.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils' achievement in religious education is deemed to be good. Pupils enter the school with standards above the national average and when pupils leave in Year 8 they have mostly very high standards. Progress is therefore judged to be good. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 is not as strong as in the higher years of the school. This is because there are not enough opportunities being provided for pupils to write and record their own learning. Coverage of written work is limited and is not being matched to the abilities of these pupils. There is an over reliance on worksheets and on copied sheets being stuck into books; as a result there was a lack of challenge for the most able pupils in several classes seen. Pupils are being taught about inspiring people but then not given sufficient time to write about them. For example, in one year group sheets on the life of St Josephine Bakhita were photocopied and pasted into books. In another year group, books labelled 'Creative Writing' showed the ability and potential that these pupils have and they are not being sufficiently challenged in RE because opportunities to write at length are limited. In some year groups coverage of RE is also insufficient because pupils are revising and being schooled for external tests. There is currently some evidence of the use of Bibles but this area also needs further development. Pupils spoken to expressed the same view and told inspectors that they did not regularly use Bibles in lessons. Pupils are being taught about other faiths such as Judaism and Islam and are eager to learn about other faiths. Parents of all faiths expressed support for the work of the school in this key area. Pupils clearly do know what they have to do to improve their work and this came across when talking with them in the classroom. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and say that they really enjoyed learning about the subject. Religious literacy is at least good in all classes right from the Reception class where pupils quickly acquire an age appropriate religious vocabulary. Pupils are highly articulate, are keen and eager to learn as much as they can in RE and are happy to share their work.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching is judged to be at least good in all classes. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 6 when drama and the use of iPads were employed. Equally an enrichment lesson in Year 7 on Philosophy and St Anthony really engaged and challenged the pupils' thinking. Teachers were quite enthusiastic although some appeared to be less confident about their own subject knowledge. In a recent survey the staff themselves have asked for more professional development in teaching the subject. Mutual respect is evident between teachers and pupils; it was witnessed in behaviour in lessons and all around the school. Pupils are eager and willing to learn but some lessons seen did not provide the necessary level of challenge. Assessment has been a key focus within the school and is developing quite well. Levels seen in some classes were however over generous and there is further work to do in this area. The use of written comments by teachers to mark and correct work is now being used much more effectively following a review in February of this year. Teachers are observed when teaching RE but this monitoring is currently lacking in systematic structures and a review of the procedures would further enhance the quality of teaching. A wide variety of homework tasks were seen and parents recognise the importance of this. The school now provides the 'Wednesday Word' which helps and encourages parents to further develop their children's own learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

The headteacher is very committed to achieving high standards in classroom religious education. He is ably assisted in this endeavour by his deputy head (academic) who is also the head of religious education. The headteacher is striving for the best for the boys in his care and is outward looking in seeking support and guidance. The school is keen to learn from best practice and this is a sign of good leadership. The school is owned and managed by Alpha Plus, an education company who run a wide network of schools. To ensure the Catholic ethos and values are being maintained there is also a Pastoral Board, the members of which have a great deal of expertise in this area. Their work is mostly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. The chair of the Pastoral Board does however undertake learning walks in the school and has accurately outlined some clear areas and suggestions for future development.

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

- Review curriculum provision to provide more opportunities to study scripture and to use Bibles
- Provide more opportunities for pupils in Years 1-6 to write at length and record their work so the standards of written work in RE reflect the high abilities of all pupils.
- Review the appropriate use of worksheets to ensure that the most able are fully challenged.
- Plan for professional development on the teaching of RE for all staff, especially in providing more challenge in RE lessons.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were three main areas outlined in the previous inspection report in November 2011. The first area was to develop further opportunities for spontaneous prayer as well as using set prayers and texts. The school has developed this area well and prayer is now stronger within the school at various times of the day. The second area was to increase awareness of scriptural texts and themes in the prayer and assemblies in the school. The school is developing this and has taken note of the recommendations by more systematic preparation for assemblies. The third area was to review the curriculum in the light of the Bishop's recommendation of 10% curriculum time being given to religious education. This area has at this point in time not been fully addressed. However, the school has now put in place plans for this to be implemented from September 2017 when it will be compliant.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

There is currently 7.6% of curriculum time devoted to RE in the school. This is not in line with the 10% of time required by the Bishops' Conference and in the Diocese of Westminster Inspection Framework it is a Limiting Judgement. Therefore the school cannot obtain an 'outstanding' grade overall in this area. As stated above an increase in the curriculum time will be implemented in September 2017. RE has a high status within the school and is seen as a key area; therefore an appropriate budget is allocated every year to resource the subject. The accommodation is being maintained to a high standard and displays reflect the Catholic identity of the school and its patron Saint Anthony. The school is committed to the further development of RE.

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

is good

Prayer and worship are incorporated into the daily life of the school in a variety of ways. At lunch, grace is said, so reflecting the Catholic tradition of the school. Prayers are offered during assemblies and hymns and psalms are also being sung during these assemblies. Prayers are said at the start and close of the day in different ways in both the Junior and Senior House. Mass is celebrated at least twice a term in the local parish church. Pupils are actively involved in this as altar servers, readers and in the choir. First Holy Communion classes are taught at the school and pupils are also prepared for their First Reconciliation. Key events within the liturgical year are celebrated such as Ash Wednesday and Advent. The parish priest, who also sits on the Pastoral Board, is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. There were positive signs of reverence shown during the course of this inspection which coincided fortuitously with 'St Anthony's Week'.

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

is good

The school supports a wide range of charities. It raises very large sums of money every year for Catholic charities, which include the Catholic Children's Society (CCS), the Cardinal Hume Centre and Mary's Meals. During this inspection all proceeds from the Summer Fair were being given to the Catholic Children's Society to support Catholic schools affected by the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower. Pupils were very eager to be of help and to be of service. They have supported charities overseas

such as Water Aid and Lepra. Pupils are aware of the theology underpinning the Common Good and are eager to be of service in the world. Parents and pupils of all faiths also expressed the wish that they could be of more practical use in their own local community by doing good works and being of service in addition to raising money.

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 good

Links with the parish are clearly very strong and the two work together in close harmony and to mutual benefit. Their links are fruitful and are developing all the time. Links with the Diocese of Westminster are strong and the school has wisely acted upon the advice of its RE adviser and her recommendations made earlier this year. Leaders regularly attend diocesan training and moderation events and have recently started visiting other Catholic schools to see best practice and learn from their colleagues. The majority of parents are supportive of the work of the school and some lovely comments were also written about how appreciative parents were. Lots of parents mentioned the success of the First Holy Communion programme. However, a minority of parents raised concerns via a questionnaire about various aspects of school life. The main issue raised was not being invited to school assemblies and liturgies. Other parents did acknowledge the excellent fund raising the school undertakes but suggested the idea of helping others in practical ways.

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

is good

The headteacher has a strong and passionate commitment to maintaining and strengthening the Catholic life of the school. He leads by his own example and is greatly respected by his pupils and school community. The Catholic life and identity of the school are central to everything he does. He is also not complacent and is seeking to always drive forward school improvement. He has recognised the need to devote 10% of curriculum time to RE and has driven this initiative forward himself. The local parish priest, who is also on the Pastoral Board, holds induction sessions for all staff new to the school both Catholic and non-Catholic. The headteacher is being challenged appropriately and supported by the school's Pastoral Board who have a wide range of experiences but all share the same high aspirations for the Catholic life of the school. They clearly know the school very well and have acted upon external advice received from the Diocese of Westminster this year as well as making their own constructive suggestions.

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

- Implement the 10% of curriculum time planned for September 2017.
- Develop further ways for parents to be able to attend more assemblies and liturgies.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be of service in the local community.

Information about this school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic independent school in the locality of Hampstead.
- The school serves the parishes of St Mary's, Hampstead.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 66%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 11% and from other faiths is 23%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 26%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 22% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom none have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is below average.

Department for Education Number	202 / 6181
Unique Reference Number	100070
Local Authority	Camden

Type of school	Preparatory
School category	Independent
Age range of pupils	4 - 13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on roll	300
The appropriate authority	The Alpha Plus Group
Chair	Sir John Ritblat
Headteacher	Mr Paul Keyte
Telephone number	020 7431 1066
Website	www.stanthonysprep.org.uk
Email address	Sadhna.halai@stanthonysprep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 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 11 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 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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