

More House School

22-24 Pont Street, London SW1X0AA

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 9 & 10 May 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The content of classroom religious education meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. It is well structured to support the pupils, who come to the school with a wide range of existing knowledge about the Catholic faith.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are confident, which leads to a positive environment in lessons.
- Pupils are eager to learn and are interested in their religious education lessons. They want to do well.
- Teaching is never less than good. It is monitored regularly and staff feel well supported.
- Pupils achieve well over time and make good progress from their many starting points.
- The department is well resourced and these resources are used in a variety of ways to engage the pupils.
- The changes made by the new head of department have already impacted positively on the department and pupils comment on a new energy to their religious education lessons.
- Lessons in religious education contribute to the overall importance of the Catholic life of the school.
- Governors play an active part in monitoring the subject and are supportive.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- More opportunities for independent learning should be built into lessons.
- Not every opportunity is taken to accelerate the learning of the more able.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- Curriculum time for religious education now exceeds the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The chapel presents a calm oasis in the heart of the school and is fully accessible to all at all times.
- The pattern of weekly form Masses has been established for some time and has been recently supplemented by the introduction of house Masses.
- The new 'Faith in Action' group provides opportunities for pupils to discuss and act upon issues of social justice. It also pulls together the many fund raising initiatives which take place each year.
- The 'Spirit and Truth' programme provides a common weekly prayer focus the school.
- There are opportunities for pupils to take part in volunteering activities.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents, which are celebrated by the whole community.
- There is strong support for the leadership of the school from the governing body, who understand the centrality of the Catholic faith.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- Prayer has become more evident, but needs to become embedded across all aspects of school life.
- More opportunities should be given for the pupils to lead and initiate prayer in the daily life of the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, the school has embedded the Levels of Attainment into the curriculum, taking into account the new requirements at Key Stages 4 and 5. Moderation in the department ensures that these are applied consistently. All of this is based around the Catholic schemes of work and helps to ensure that the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) is fully covered. Classroom teaching is differentiated; scaffolded tasks ensure that pupils are all supported and extension tasks are available in all lessons.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of classroom religious education (RE) meets the requirements of the RECD and conforms to Bishops' Conference requirements of 10% curriculum time at Key Stages 3 and 4 and 5% for core RE in the sixth form. It is well structured to support the pupils who come to the school with a wide range of existing knowledge about the Catholic faith, including a large number who are not Catholic. Teaching of other faiths is covered and supported by pupils of other faiths who are happy to share their religious practices with their peers. The department is well resourced and has created learning environments which support pupils with displays of key terms and readily available Bibles, Catechisms and other books. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and appreciate the work put in by their teachers. The school has adopted the diocesan model for core RE which is now being implemented across the sixth form. Pupils say that they find the lessons 'interesting and engaging,' and relevant to their lifestyle.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils achieve well in RE. Progress is varied given the many different starting points of the pupils joining the school. There is clear differentiation in all lessons with support for those who need it. Extension tasks are used to provide stretch and challenge for the more able. There is strong attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Key Stages 4 and 5. The school knows its pupils extremely well and is able to support them through exams with interventions and personalised revision help. Pupils show a deepening understanding of the Catholic faith as they move up through the school and religious literacy skills are developed well. Pupils are aware of their targets and how assessment points are used throughout the year to monitor their work. Staff use this tracking data well to tailor support to those who need it.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is never less than good. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons which leads to them make the progress they do. Teachers show strong subject knowledge and have high expectations. They plan lessons which clearly build on the pupils' previous learning and lead them on to their new learning. In Year 10, pupils studying the sanctity of life were able to link their learning about euthanasia to work they had already completed on abortion and IVF; in Year 7, pupils were able to explain what parables are as they examined the story of the Prodigal Son. Teachers create a supportive and positive environment in lessons where praise and encouragement along with different types of questioning move the pupils forward in their learning. Pupils are confident to put forward their own ideas, even if they are different from others, as they know that their opinion is valued and taken seriously by staff and their peers. The different needs of the pupils are addressed well, with support for those that need it and extension work in place for the more able, although this does not always fully challenge pupils. Marking and feedback are used to drive learning, but not always consistently across all year groups. Pupils say that they know how they are performing in RE and understand the school's assessment procedures. Regular homework helps consolidate learning and

develop research skills; there is scope for increasing opportunities for pupils to engage in independent learning, both in homework and in lessons.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education

is outstanding

Since joining in September, the new head of department has brought a strong vision to the department, which has clearly been shared with all, and is already beginning to show impact. There is a consistency in approach throughout the department in the planning and delivery of RE and a drive to make classroom RE impact on the daily life of the school. The pupils commented that they feel a new sense of energy in their RE lessons and the way they can make a difference throughout the school. On their questionnaires completed for the inspection, many parents commented on the enthusiasm their daughters have for RE. The head of department has high expectations which are communicated through weekly departmental meetings which have led to a renewed drive for excellence. The systems for observation, marking and feedback and tracking are all becoming embedded and the department expects to see this work pay off in the results this summer. There is a commitment to continuing professional development for the departmental staff and a system for reporting back on this in order to improve practice for all. The co-heads support this programme and make sure that it is viable.

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

- Ensure that every opportunity is taken to accelerate the learning of pupils, especially the more able.
- Offer more opportunities to enable independent learning in RE.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, the school has increased the amount of time given to RE so that it now exceeds the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. There is a greater emphasis on prayer throughout the school with a new school prayer introduced this year and a 'Spirit and Truth' programme of weekly prayer shared throughout the school. The school has worked extensively with the diocese to review the resources and provision for its Catholic life.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

Religious education is given the full curriculum time required by the Bishops' Conference and slightly exceeds this at Key Stages 3 and 5. The department has a budget in excess of other core subjects and has good facilities within the limited space available in the school. It is supported by the co-heads and governors who ensure staff development is kept up to date. RE has a high profile in the school and strong support from parents. A large number of parents returned questionnaires to the inspection team which were overwhelmingly positive. One parent commented 'More House has built on the foundation of faith (she) acquired at her Catholic primary school'. The school is looking to appoint a chaplain, which would further support the head of department in her role.

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

is good

The school places importance on the celebration of Mass and holds several whole school Masses a year at the Church of St Mary, Cadogan Street. Weekly form Masses have been established for some time and have been recently supplemented by the introduction of house Masses. Full use is made of the school chapel. Pupils take part by providing bidding prayers for Masses; they also read, alongside staff, governors and parents. Music of a high standard enhances these occasions. All pupils of all faiths are invited to attend these sacramental occasions. Prayer opportunities are well planned; the 'Spirit and Truth' programme, organised by the head of department, allows all form groups to follow a familiar pattern of prayer based on the Gospel readings of the week. Other faith pupils are supported in their own faith whilst being invited to partake fully in the prayer life of the school. They are invited to talk about their religion and are provided with a prayer space of their own. All the pupils comment that they enjoy being able to talk about different faiths with their peers and learn from each other. Retreats take place for Years 8 and 10, sometimes with providers in-house and sometimes outside at centres like SPEC in Pinner. Plans are in place to extend this to all years from September 2019 and pupils have said that they would welcome this opportunity. Traditional and liturgical prayers are evident, alongside the well-established house prayers and the new school prayer and more opportunities for spontaneous prayer are being built into the pupils' experience through initiatives like the 'Spirit and Truth' programme. The prayer group, led by the head of department, write prayers each week which are used in staff briefings and at other points during the week. Staff are encouraged to take part in daily prayer and, following recent training on the distinctive nature of the Catholic school, more of them are taking the opportunity to lead prayer.

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

is good

The school has a long tradition of fund raising for different causes, be they local as in the Glass Door homeless shelter; national by supporting Cafod or global in that they celebrate Fair-trade Fortnight. The new head of department has pulled these together under the 'Faith in Action' programme,

which clearly links fundraising activities to the Gospel values and social justice, and this has expanded the range of activities open to the pupils. Volunteering opportunities such as helping at the Glass Door Centre and in an old peoples' home are available to the pupils. There is a strong sense of community and pupils respect and value each other. During the inspection, a non-uniform day involving the whole school was taking place to raise funds for the sixth formers taking part in environmental work in India in the summer. The house system also provides a way for the pupils to mix across all year groups. There is a good understanding of the call to human flourishing and the school celebrates the gifts and talents of all its members through assemblies, prize giving, exhibitions and many concerts. They have the chance to serve each other through the peer mentoring system, sixth form mentors for the Year 7 pupils and through membership of the school council. Increasingly, more pupils are choosing to join the 'Faith in Action' group and the prayer group.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school and many of them took the time to return the diocesan questionnaire. One said, 'I am grateful that my daughter is able to get a complete perspective that begins with Christ'. Parents are regularly invited to take part in school events, including school Masses and other information events which help them support their daughters' education. Two parents run a group in the school for pupils preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The school has good links with its feeder primary schools and works hard to ensure that transition to secondary school is made a positive experience. The RE department has recently begun working with other secondary schools including taking part in a sixth form conference at The Douay Martyrs School. The school draws from a wide range of parishes. It has strong links with St Mary's, Cadogan Street where it is able to hold whole school Masses and liturgies. The school is lucky to have more than one local priest to support them in making Mass available in the school chapel. The school has worked extensively with the diocese to improve the provision of Catholic life in the school. The diocesan advisor has delivered training to the whole staff and supported the RE department. Training at the diocese is fully utilised, as well as subject and leadership conferences.

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

is good

The new head of RE has brought a new vision to the Catholic life of the school, which is recognised and fully supported by the co-heads and governing body. Pupils and staff have responded to this call to deepen their understanding of the distinctiveness of a Catholic school and are keen to take more initiative in the opportunities offered to them through the prayer group and the 'Faith in Action' group. All staff have a good induction, which helps them understand the centrality of catholicism in the school and also have Catholic life as part of their appraisal. The co-heads and head of department are committed to driving forward opportunities for pupils to experience the fullness of Catholic life. The governing body actively support this through their attendance at school events, through monitoring visits and meetings with key staff. The school models excellent relationships at all levels, through which the call to human flourishing is evident and valued by all members of the community.

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

- Pupils should be given more opportunities to initiate and prepare prayer and liturgies.
- Continue to support non-Catholic staff and pupils to experience all that the Catholic life of the school can give them.

Information about this school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic girls' independent school in the locality of Knightsbridge.
- The school serves the parish of St Mary's, Chelsea.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 32%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 40 % and from other faiths is 19%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 27%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 2.
- There are 41 % 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 above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is above average.

Department for Education Number	207 6202
Unique Reference Number	100521
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Independent
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Female
Number of pupils on roll	203
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Fyfe
Headteacher (Co-Heads)	Mr Michael Keeley and Mrs Amanda Leach
Telephone number	0207 235 2855
Website	www.morehouse.org.uk
Email address	office@morehousemail.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 th December 2013
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.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, co-heads, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 16 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 Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Catherine McMahon

Lead Inspector

Miss Anne Moloney

Associate Inspector

Ms Nicola Walsh

Associate Inspector

Ms Robina Maher

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005
E: education@rcdow.org.uk
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>