



Diocese of Westminster

Saint Christina's School

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DFE Number: 213 6225

Headteacher: Miss N. Clyne-Wilson

Chair of Governors: Mrs. J. McConnell

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 22-23rd November 2012

Date of previous inspection: June 2007

Reporting Inspector: Deacon A. Clark

Introduction

The inspector would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspector spent two days in school, visited eleven lessons and two Acts of Classroom Worship, and carried out five interviews with school staff, pupils, parents and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons, examination of school documents, and attendance at a whole school Mass.

The Inspection of Saint Christina's School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Description of School

The school is a two form entry at KS1 and one form at KS2 in the LA of Westminster and the locality of St John's Wood. The school is in the trusteeship of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The school is located in the parish of Our Lady in St John's Wood. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 70%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 18% and from other faiths 12%.

There are 219 pupils on roll, with 0 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1: Outstanding;*
Grade 1: Very Good;
Grade 2: Good;
Grade 3: Requires improvement;
Grade 4: Causing Concern.

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade: [1]

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupil's religious literacy is very good. The pupils are able to articulate the message of Jesus and explain appropriately how they are living it. The use of Scripture is threaded through all the teaching units. The pupils are progressively asked to think about the reasons behind what they are taught. The lesson plans follow the content of the Curriculum Directory and the structure of the religious education programme the Way, the Truth and the Life effectively. The school has put structures in place to ensure both the quality of teaching and the monitoring of pupil learning. The school's self evaluation is accurate

and under the clear guidance of both the headteacher and the religious education coordinator the subject benefits from direction and vision.

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?

The school has achieved the two improvements suggested in the previous inspection, bringing up to 10% the curriculum time given to religious education, and making the levels of attainment and assessment for learning integral with the teaching of religious education.

To improve, the school should maintain its programme to incorporate the attainment levels in religious education in the light of the new Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the revised textbooks of the Way the Truth and the Life series (WTL). The school should look to continue incorporating the Biblical approaches to religious education proposed by the diocesan advisers.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade [1]

The content of classroom religious education meets the requirements of the new Curriculum Directory. This has been achieved by ensuring the key elements of the new Curriculum Directory have been circulated to all teachers of religious education as well as sheets outlining the links between WTL and the new directory. The four elements of the directory Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ were threaded through the lesson planning. The Sex and Relationships programme, 'This is my Body' is linked to and conforms with the Curriculum Directory.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade [1]

Pupil achievement in religious education is very good in the following areas - differentiation by task and ability to think for themselves. Teachers knew which level each pupil had attained and what they needed to make further progress. Differentiated tasks were clearly in place both stretching for the more able pupils, and encouraging for pupils who were less able. Pupils were expected to articulate their knowledge and understanding and in the upper classes to formulate their points of view. A class which was organised as a debate on the relevance of the ten commandments in today's world indicated how well pupils could formulate their position and the reasons for it. The school has put together a portfolio of levelled work to gauge pupil progress.

The quality of teaching

Grade [1]

The quality of teaching is very good. The lessons observed were all in the range of very good or outstanding. There is evidence of thorough preparation based on good planning. Pupils are eager to learn and want to respond to the higher expectations of the teachers. In the classroom there is an air of calm and well rehearsed patterns of good behaviour. Teachers are able to employ wide varieties of teaching styles and initiatives based on the good communication with and behaviour by the pupils. They use a bank of creative strategies to engage the full range of pupil ability. ICT is used both passively and actively in the teaching approaches. The recently acquired Ipads with Scripture both in text form and a simplified cartoon form was particularly noted. One class used ipads to film a staged television interview with Archbishop Romero, with different pupils giving soundbites of their views on him depending on whether they represented the rich or the poor.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [1]

The leadership and management of religious education is very good. The experienced RE coordinator with the support of the headteacher ensures every teacher has in their files both the key religious education documents and suggested methods for implementing them. The systems for ensuring teachers are up to date both on curriculum content and assessment procedures were regularly illustrated by teachers explaining their approach in the context of the inspection. Pupils expect to know how well they are doing and how they can improve. Religious education is clearly cross-curriculum in its reach and application. Religious education is a subject the children enjoy and it benefits from the support of the Director of Studies who is an ordained priest, the chaplain Sister and RE coordinator. Religious education features prominently in the school's rolling improvement plan.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade: [1*]

The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The pupils receive and are involved in a rich experience of Catholic life and liturgy. As well as the externals of religiously themed posters and displays, along with prayer corners in every classroom, the pupils are invited to live a life of generosity and care for others following the example of Jesus. The assemblies, the prayer before and after meals, and the weekly mass all make for a participation in the life of Catholic community a reality. As well as some original Christian murals in the corridors, the pupil's experience of music both sacred and secular is rich. The pupils experience different ways of praying, and are outstanding in their confidence in reading and serving at Mass.

What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school ?

Since the last inspection the school has gained a greater sense of self confidence in its Catholic identity and life. Being Catholic has become more deeply ingrained in the culture of the school. The school should continue to promote opportunities for its pupils to engage in helping others, both in the local community and through its initiatives to raise money and collect for the less well off. Its engagement with other schools in joint in-service opportunities developing both religious education skills and staff awareness of Catholic teaching should be maintained and developed.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade [1*]

The place of religious education is at the core of the curriculum and the school is outstanding in devoting time, staffing, accommodation and resources to ensure its place. It gives 10% of curriculum

time to religious education as well as hymn practices and weekly mass. There are regular continuing professional development opportunities for the staff, both at diocesan training events as well as from other outside experts in religious education. Excellent cross curricular links are maintained, including in art, history and music. The subject area is well resourced with texts, ICT equipment and software, and most effectively the support of the Handmaids from the community. New staff, as part of their induction, are carefully mentored in both the understanding of religious education and in the Catholic life of the school. Over 80% of the teachers are Catholic and over 40% have the CCRS or other Catholic qualification

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

Grade [1*]

The pupil's experience of Catholic worship is outstanding. The combination of the daily prayer, the weekly mass, and the quality of the music gives a rich and prayerful rhythm to the experience of the pupils. Classes take it in turn to prepare for the weekly masses with each child finding a role. Pupils are confident in their reading in the chapel. The ubiquitous presence of the Handmaids with their support and interest ensures that the charism of the St Raphaela Mary is well known and respected among the pupils. The prayer corners in every classroom indicate well the focus of the liturgical year and the theme of the religious education topic. Seasonal devotions such as October rosary and Lent stations of the cross are in place. A prayer/peace bench and garden has been installed in the playground. Annual retreats and special occasions such as feast of St Raphaela Mary all contribute to the life of faith of the school. Catholic pupils are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion and all pupils are given a part to play in their celebration.

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

Grade [1*]

The school's contribution to the Common Good is outstanding. In the footsteps of St Raphaela, the foundress of the Handmaids, the pupils are committed to reaching out to those in need. The St Raphaela Mary Society has been introduced in Year 5 to encourage charitable giving. The parents and the Governors are caught up in the various initiatives to raise money and resources. Particularly noticeable was the initiative of the head and deputy head girls who set up the School Spirit awards which recognise particular good works of pupils on a weekly basis. The School Council made up of elected representatives from each class has a positive say in which charities should be helped. The recent visit by a number of pupils to the Council Chambers of the London Assembly and the office of the Mayor gave the pupils the opportunity to ask questions about how the needs of others in London were being met. The pupils in the school come from divergent cultural backgrounds and respect underpins their relationships and behaviour with each other. The staff lead by example, eg both staff and pupils participate in Family Fast Days.

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;

Grade [1]

The partnership of the parents, school and parish as an integral part of the diocese is very good. The school has many links with bishops and priests both in and beyond the diocese. The links with the parents are exceptionally strong and in matters to do with both fund raising and growing in faith with their children in preparation for the sacraments they give generously. Parents lead sessions in the school on their faith and cultural celebrations. The school has a constructive relationship with the local parish and cooperates positively whenever possible. The school demonstrates its partnership with the diocese by its participation in diocesan inservice events, following its lead in matters concerning the religious education curriculum and its assessment. The head attends diocesan and national Catholic head teacher conferences while the deputy head has been co-opted

by the diocese onto its succession planning working party. The school invited local Catholic schools to its annual inservice day this year led by the Plymouth diocesan adviser.

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

Grade [1*]

The leadership and management of the school in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. All the senior management team are involved and no chance to enhance the Catholic life of the school is passed by. Governors are closely involved in giving support to the school to ensure that the catholic life continues to flourish. Whenever any aspect is planned, the catholic life and approach is immediately considered. Within the staff which has members from other Christian denominations and faiths, there is a united vision to ensure that the Catholic values are lived out. Whether it's planning for school retreats, or teachers enrolling on the CCRS, the management of the school is supportive and positive. All staff participate in staff retreat days and are supported by the school chaplain. The school mission statement is embodied in the school song which is regularly sung at key moments in the year and appears in all school documents and publications. The opening line reads 'We share and care and forgive, for that is how Christ teaches us to live'.



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Overall Grade [1]

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade [1]

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade [1]

The quality of teaching

Grade [1]

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [1]

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade [1*]

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade [1*]

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

Grade [1*]

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

Grade [1*]

The 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

Grade [1]

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

Grade [1*]