

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Macklin Street, London, WC2B 5NA

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 21 June 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The curriculum is being well developed by school leaders and the subject leader for religious education. A wide range of resources are used to enhance the curriculum; this is particularly evident in the use of art.
- During the course of this inspection, pupils were learning about Peace Week. Other faiths are being appropriately covered including Sikhism and Judaism.
- Standards of pupil achievement have shown a rising trend over the last three years. Standards in religious education are now broadly in line with national averages.
- Pupils' writing linking Gospel values to Catholic Social Teaching is of the very highest standard and pupils are being challenged to develop their thinking skills.
- The quality of teaching is at least good in all classes seen with outstanding aspects also in evidence in upper Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
- The leadership of religious education is good. The headteacher, ably supported by a committed leader of religious education, is determined that the subject has the highest priority in the school's curriculum. She is relentless in her drive to ensure high standards. Governors are well informed.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The school needs to review the timetabling of religious education lessons to ensure that the timing and length of lessons are age appropriate.
- Leaders need to focus even further on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher and her leadership team in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Some of the practice within the school such as its prayer life and teachings about Catholic Social Teaching is exemplary.
- All areas for improvement outlined in the previous report have been successfully addressed. The school has developed outstanding opportunities for prayer groups for pupils via its 'Guardian Angels' and 'Archangels' groups. Pupils were very eager to discuss this area and proudly spoke of the lead roles they are given.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are judged to be outstanding.
- The school has a distinctive system of 'Guardian Angels' for all classes including for the younger children. These are overseen by 'Archangels' from Key Stage 2 classes who guide and lead the others in prayer and worship and foster opportunities for spiritual development. This is a unique and distinctive feature of the school.
- The school is judged to be truly outstanding in its work to promote the Common Good. The school genuinely understands and promotes Pope Francis' call to 'human flourishing.' The level of knowledge of the pupils in almost all years around the theology of the Common Good was exemplary. The teaching and learning around this area is of the very highest standard.
- Parents are very supportive and greatly value the work of school leaders.
- The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has improved in many ways since the previous inspection. Training has been provided to enable more teachers to get the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education Studies (CCRS). Further opportunities are also being provided to enable staff to gain this qualification. Standards of attainment have risen and now outcomes in religious education (RE) are broadly in line with other core subjects such as English. Coverage of religious education is extensive and covers all four required areas. The school highlights as a key development the focus on art and creativity within the school since the previous inspection. Evidence of pupils work on display all around the school shows this to be a strength of the school.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of St Joseph's Catholic School's religious education (RE) curriculum meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The curriculum is being well developed by the subject leader of RE. A wide range of resources are being used to enhance the curriculum and this is particularly evident in the use of art and design in all areas of the school. The school uses resources from Cafod, the World Wildlife Fund and the call of Pope Francis to protect the stewardship of the earth. The school has also developed extensive resources around the teaching of Catholic Social Teaching. During the course of this inspection, pupils were learning about 'Peace Week.' Other faiths are well covered including Sikhism and Judaism. The timetabling of the delivery of the content of religious education is currently not consistent. Some lessons are too long and not appropriate for the age of the pupils. This aspect of the RE curriculum needs to be reviewed.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Standards of pupil achievement have shown a rising trend over the last three years. Standards in RE are now broadly in line with the national average and other core subjects such as mathematics and English. Pupils are given opportunities to write at length and also encouraged to do research and use their creativity where appropriate. Children enter the school with levels below the national average. By the end of Reception, children show, by their learning journey books that they have made good progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) a wide range of age appropriate tasks are provided to develop children's religious literacy. In the Nursery, children were learning the story of the Good Samaritan using puppets and role play. In Reception, children begin to learn about saints such as St Theresa of Lisieux. In Year 2 pupils are beginning to use scripture from both the Old and New Testament to enhance their learning. In Year 2 pupils are clearly making progress as evidenced by extended writing in their books about the Last Supper. Standards in upper Key Stage 2 are high. In Year 5 pupils are learning to understand that the Eucharist is a sacrifice and memorial. Pupils' written work in analysing the hymn 'Amazing Love' related to the Gospel stories in the Bible and the crucifixion showed evidence of deeper learning taking place. Pupils' writing that links Gospel values to Catholic Social Teaching is of the very highest standard. Pupils are being challenged in their thinking and produce persuasive letters, do research and debate around a wide range of contemporary issues. Recent letters about the use of money to rebuild Notre Dame Cathedral showed both writing and understanding of a high level. A scrutiny of books showed that pupils take pride in their work and books are neat and well cared for. Coverage is generally good. Standards of achievement and progress are not however consistent in all classes.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching is at least good in all classes seen with outstanding aspects also in evidence in upper Key Stage 2. Pupils do make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils in almost all classes were engaged and interested in their learning. The topic of the week was 'Peace Week' and this really allowed for high quality discussion and debate across a wide range of lessons. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and this came across clearly in lessons. Teaching assistants play an effective role in most lessons and are being well deployed. Staff turnover has meant that not all teaching is of an equally high standard. A very positive climate for learning exists in the school and pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed their learning in RE. The school's approach to 'Restorative Justice' ensures high standards of behaviour in lessons and all around the school. The school does have a marking policy and an aim for this to be employed by all teachers. Further work needs to be done to clarify expectations to teachers and ensure it is being followed. Assessment procedures are now robust and leaders display a sound and accurate awareness of standards. Homework is regularly provided and allows pupils to undertake deeper research into such topics as Fairtrade and the lives of famous saints.

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

The leadership and management of RE are good. The headteacher, ably supported by a committed leader of RE, is determined that the subject has the highest priority in the school's curriculum. She is relentless in her drive to ensure high standards for all pupils. The subject is being very well led. The school has been outward looking and leaders are being supported by the adviser from the Diocese of Westminster Education Service. Challenge and support from knowledgeable governors are equally evident; in particular the RE link governor who has a wealth of experience in this area. Quality of teaching is monitored carefully over time and the school now has key priorities for development in the years ahead. Self-evaluation is accurate and identifies areas for development. It does however need refining as it is currently over long and too descriptive rather than evaluative and concise. The school readily avails of training opportunities provided by the diocese and are looking to provide further training for support staff

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

- Review the timetabling of RE lessons.
- Further develop curriculum resources and assessment procedures to ensure a more skills based curriculum is developed.
- Improve further the quality of teaching and learning to ensure more outstanding typicality of teaching over time.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

All areas for improvement outlined in the previous report have been successfully addressed. The school itself has highlighted the increased opportunities for parents to participate in acts of worship as a key development. The school has outstanding opportunities for prayer groups for pupils via its 'Guardian Angels' and 'Archangels' groups. Pupils were very eager to discuss this area and proudly spoke of the lead roles they are given. This has ensured that this is indeed a very prayerful school.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

There is 10% of curriculum time devoted to RE in every class, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Timetabling however needs to be reviewed to ensure best practice and to ensure age appropriate duration of lessons. Teaching staff either have, or are working towards higher level qualifications in Catholic education. The school allocates a budget every year to enhance the teaching about the Catholic faith. RE resources, including books are plentiful and have been carefully chosen to cover all areas of the curriculum. Staff development training is carefully planned for and is extensive in this school. Recent training has focused on the assessment and levelling of pupil's work and encouraging creativity in RE.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and is judged to be outstanding. There are extensive opportunities within the school for daily collective worship and prayer. The children in the EYFS are quickly introduced to the prayer life of the school in a sensitive and age appropriate way. All classes have high quality prayer areas, a prayer focus and appropriate liturgical colours. Displays of work and around the school are of a high standard. There are some fine examples of religious art in every corner and corridor of this school. Children at all ages and all key stages play an active part in prayer and liturgy in a wide variety of ways. Evidence of a highly developed prayer life in the school is also clear from the school's website. The school has a distinctive system of 'Guardian Angels' for all classes including for the younger children. These are overseen by 'Archangels' from Key Stage 2 classes who guide and lead the others in prayer and worship and foster opportunities for spiritual development. This is a unique and distinctive feature of this school and one of the main reasons it is judged to be outstanding. During the course of this inspection, pupils in almost all classes were seen leading worship, prayer and liturgy. Music is also prominent in this school and children certainly do sing and perform with enjoyment and gusto. Prayer and worship are integral and woven into every aspect of the daily life of the school. The celebration of the Eucharist is carefully planned both in school and in the local parish church and many other sacramental celebrations are offered at key times throughout the liturgical year. Parents are invited to all events in the school and local parish church. The school has a parents' prayer group. The parish priests are frequent and always welcome visitors to the school.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

is outstanding

The school is judged to be truly outstanding in its work to promote the Common Good. The school genuinely understands and promotes Pope Francis' call to 'human flourishing.' Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents both in school and also in the wider world at large. The level of knowledge of the pupils in almost all years around the theology of

the Common Good was exemplary. The teaching and learning around this area is of the very highest standard. Pupils were able to speak about links with local charities such as 'Four Walls', a local homeless charity, and global charities such as Cafod and the World Wildlife Fund. What was most impressive was the way pupils had retained in their long term memory the work of these charities and the theology underpinning the work they do. Their recall and articulate response were both outstanding. Pupils celebrate both British and Gospel values via assemblies and displays. Pupils are developing understanding of some of the moral issues of the day and are eager and enthusiastic to do good works in the world. Letters written about the Grenfell fire and the ethics about spending money on repairing Notre Dame Cathedral were of a very high standard. Equally evident was the work around 'Laudato Si' and conserving wildlife; again work of a high standard both written and verbal. The way in which the school embraces Catholic Social Teaching and living Gospel values is exemplary.

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

Parents are very supportive and greatly value the work of the school and its leaders. The partnerships with all of the above groups are judged to be outstanding. Parents spoken with in the morning and via responses to surveys are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. Parents all mentioned the good start the young children receive in the early years. The close knit and pastoral care provided by the school was also frequently mentioned. Links with the parish are very close and fruitful. The school is integral to parish life and community. Links with the diocese are equally strong at all levels. The diocesan adviser has played a key role in school development. The school has a well designed and informative website that provides useful information to the wider community.

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

is outstanding

One instantly knows this is a Catholic school the minute one enters through the doors. The role of the headteacher is central to the success of this school. Her drive and vision to enhance the school's Catholicity are evident as one goes around St Joseph's. The RE leader has been equally effective in the year since she started at the school. She has played a key role in ensuring continual improvement. There is equally a shared commitment from staff and governors to ensure the centrality of the Catholic life of this school. The school is constantly reviewing its practice in the light of external developments. Staff surveys recognise the positive improvements made in the last academic year. The school motto: 'We live, love and learn through Jesus' is a living reality in this school. Therefore, leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are judged to be outstanding.

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

- Provide further training opportunities for teaching assistants to support the Catholic life, prayer and worship in the school.
- Develop work in partnership with Caritas to become a pilot school in the diocese.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic Junior school in Camden in the locality of Covent Garden
- The school serves mainly the parishes of St Anselm and St Cecelia (Lincoln's Inn Fields) and Corpus Christi (Maiden Lane).
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 61%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 12% and from other faiths is 26%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 60%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 1, with 3 currently completing the CCRS.
- There are 27 (13%) of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 8 have statements of Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average
- There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 72 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (36%).

Department for Education Number	202 3482
Unique Reference Number	100041
Local Authority	Camden

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	211
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Julian Fulbrook
Headteacher	Miss Helen Tyler
Telephone number	020 7242 7712
Website	www.stjosephs.camden.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stjosephs.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Very good
Catholic life of the school	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 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 8 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 10 acts of prayer and worship in classes.
- 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.

Mr Sean Flood

Lead Inspector

Mrs Angela Dodd

Associate Inspector

Ms Noreta Reece

Associate Inspector

Mr Patrick Murphy

Associate Inspector

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Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005

E: education@rcdow.org.uk

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