

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Masbro Road, Hammersmith, London, W14 0LT

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 2 March 2022



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The content of curriculum RE meets all the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* in an exceptional way; it is creative and engaging and meets the learning needs of all groups of pupils.
- The use of 'big questions' is a strong feature in developing the philosophical thinking skills of pupils.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. The evidence of pupil progress, as demonstrated in internal systems, deanery, and diocesan moderation, indicate that pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Pupils excel through high teacher expectations and engagement in their own learning. There is a genuine enthusiasm from pupils to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The learning relationships between teacher and pupil, and peer to peer are very strong and consequently lead to accelerated learning.
- A significant strength of the school is the consistent use of teacher questioning that stretches and challenges pupils.
- There is a clear and dynamic vision and direction for RE which is shared by staff and governors. The school's vision of 'aspiring to greatness' is fully embraced in the delivery of the RE curriculum.
- The headteacher works closely with the subject leader of RE to ensure that standards in RE continue to improve; this has led to significant and sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- The subject leader and leadership team work hard in relentlessly pursuing excellence.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- RE is at the heart of this school. RE receives the 10% curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- The liturgical and prayer life of St Mary's is at the heart of this school community. Contributions are made by all families in each year group to the class/family prayer book and these are shared each day.
- Pupils' spiritual development is enabled through the excellent opportunities they have for quiet, reflection, sharing and discussion, enhanced by the high level of religious literacy.
- Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need, over time and in depth, and pro-active in creative ways of responding locally, nationally and globally.
- St Mary's works extremely hard to develop strong relationships with parents, the parish, other local Catholic schools and particularly those in the Deanery and beyond. These are crucial to school life and contribute to the Catholic identity and success of the school.
- The headteacher has a strong vision of Catholic education and how this challenges all to aspire to greatness. The Catholic life of the school is very well led by the headteacher and the leadership team.
- The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of the strengths and areas for development; it is based on rigorous monitoring and analysis. As a result, inspectors were able to validate the school's judgments of itself. This is an outstanding Catholic school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the previous inspection the school was given three targets to improve the teaching and learning in RE. Firstly, 'review the curriculum and, as the school itself has identified, implement the units of Margaret Carswell to ensure greater depth and coverage of the RE curriculum'. This target has been successfully met. The detailed curriculum planning demonstrates that topics in RE are covered in depth. Secondly, 'introduce a planned programme to teach about other faiths'. This target has been successfully met. The teaching of other faiths is very well planned and resourced; each year pupils study Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism building on their knowledge and understanding. Thirdly, 'improve the quality teaching and learning across the school'. This target has been met successfully. Teaching is strong and as a result pupils receive a high-quality experience in RE lessons across all phases in the school.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of curriculum RE meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory in an exceptional way; it is creative and engaging and meets all groups of pupils' learning needs. In a creative lesson exploring the theological concept of incarnation, the teacher orchestrated a lively class debate that developed pupils' oracy skills. The programmes of study and schemes of work provide a systematic study of God, the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold and the relationship between faith and life and illustrate where, when, and how key aspects of the content are taught and assessed. The school has recently developed a system of knowledge organisers across the school to support pupil learning. Teachers are starting to use them in RE to good effect in securing pupils' knowledge and understanding, however this could be further embedded so that it is routine pedagogical practice in lessons. There is a wide range of evidence of how topics are revisited throughout the delivery of the curriculum over all key stages to show progression and greater depth of provision. The use of 'big questions' is a strong feature of the curriculum in developing the philosophical thinking skills of pupils. For instance, in Year 4, pupils are challenged to consider the question 'what makes our world wonderful?' There are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment through visits to places of worship, for example a visit to the Jewish museum supports pupils' knowledge and understanding of Judaism. The parish priest is used to very good effect in supporting the RE curriculum with regular visits to classes.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. The evidence of pupil progress, as demonstrated in internal systems, deanery, and diocesan moderation, indicate that pupils make rapid and sustained progress. The school has developed its own assessment procedures in line with the Age-Related Standards Framework. As a result, teachers have become increasingly confident in their planning. Regular tracking of pupils' attainment allows teachers to provide targeted support that ensures that pupils make progress. Pupils excel through high teacher expectations and engagement in their own learning. There is a genuine enthusiasm from pupils to learn. Pupils can confidently articulate their understanding of deep theological concepts. Pupil work is of a high standard; their written work is strong and comparable to high standards in other subjects. Pupil presentation of their work in their books is excellent and behaviour is outstanding. The learning relationships between teacher and pupil and peer to peer are very strong and consequently lead to accelerated learning. A significant strength of the school is the religious literacy of the pupils. Pupils are confident users of religious vocabulary and illustrate excellent knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability, applying a wide variety of skills to great effect in their work.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching in all key stages is outstanding and never less than good. As a result, the pupils in this school flourish. Teachers are creative in their planning, in one lesson the preparation for role playing the stations of the cross was very effective. Teacher subject knowledge is very good in most lessons and there is systematic and effective checking of pupil understanding. In a Key Stage 1 lesson that focused on describing the stations of the cross, the teacher had organised very effective differentiation that enabled pupils to make rapid progress in their learning. A significant strength of the school is the consistent use of teacher questioning that stretches and challenges pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson on the history of the stations of the cross, the teacher was able to interact with pupils' responses so that an informed class discussion took place. Teacher marking is frequent and of a consistently high quality. Pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve; they can articulate what they are learning and why. Pupil voice is a major part of the feedback process.

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

There is a clear and dynamic vision and direction for RE which is shared by staff and governors. The school's vision of 'aspiring to greatness' is fully embraced in the delivery of the RE curriculum. The subject leader has a strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the Church and its impact on the daily life of the school. The headteacher works closely with the subject leader of RE to ensure that standards in RE continue to improve; this has led to significant and sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The use of teacher peer support to develop pedagogical practice has had a good impact in developing confidence in teaching RE. Systems to monitor the quality of RE are very effective and provide information that enhances subject delivery. The subject leader has an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development in religious education. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate, and the leadership is actively engaged in improving the quality of religious education offered to pupils. Issues are clearly identified and action on the areas for development is already well established with regular evaluation ensuring excellent progress. The subject leader and leadership team work hard in relentlessly pursuing excellence.

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

- Continue to support individual staff with their RE subject knowledge.
- Further develop pupil knowledge and understanding by embedding the use of knowledge organisers in RE lessons.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the last inspection the school was given two targets to develop the Catholic life of the school. Firstly, 'Provide more sustainable activities and charities to support at home and overseas, such as Nazareth House, to enhance even further enhance the outstanding work already being undertaken'. This target has been successfully met. The introduction of the 'Mini Vinnies' has ensured that pupils are engaging in sustainable social action. Secondly, 'develop potential RE/senior leaders to support the head in the near future'. This target has been successfully met.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

RE is at the heart to this school and receives the 10% curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The place and importance of religious education are acknowledged through appropriate recognition and contribution to whole school issues at leadership level. This is reflected in the whole school development plan. Governors and leadership team offer outstanding support and active guidance in developing and reviewing the place of religious education in the school. The high quality RE displays across the school, in the main hall, classrooms and corridors, are testimony to the status of RE in the school.

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

is outstanding

The liturgical and prayer life of St Mary's is at the heart of this school community. Contributions are made by all families in each year group to the class/family prayer book and these are shared each day. The school has a strong understanding of itself as a Catholic worshipping community and the parish priest plans the celebration of Mass with staff each half term and also celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent. The liturgical year, with its cycle of scripture readings and themes, is the foundation of all experiences and opportunities for prayer and reflection. Inspectors attended the Ash Wednesday Mass in the local parish church; pupils' levels of participation were strong, especially in their singing. The school excels in offering daily opportunities for pupils to pray and reflect. Pupil engagement in both the planning and preparation of prayer and liturgy is an integral part of the school's commitment to them. In a classroom liturgy the teacher created an excellent atmosphere for prayer, making effective use of silent reflection. Pupils' spiritual development is enabled through the excellent opportunities they have for quiet, reflection, sharing and discussion and their high level of religious literacy enhances this.

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

is outstanding

There are strong systems in place to ensure that both staff and pupils respect and value each individual and that all gifts and talents are recognised and celebrated. There are opportunities within the curriculum and in after-school provision for pupils to foster their talents and these are regularly celebrated in assemblies. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need, over time and in depth, and pro-active in creative ways of responding locally, nationally and globally. The Mini Vinnies group is taking the initiative in ensuring belief is put into action in the local community and the school is very proud of its ongoing links with St Vincent's Care Home and Nazareth House, Hammersmith. Charity fund-raising is a key feature of the school, pupils support a range of organisations such as The Passage, The Catholic Children's Society and CAFOD. Pupils have a clear

understanding of the theology underpinning their actions making links to the school mission statement, 'growing in God's love and care.'

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

St Mary's works extremely hard to develop strong relationships with parents, the parish and other local Catholic schools, particularly those in the Deanery. These are crucial to school life and contribute to the Catholic identity and success of the school. The school enjoys high levels of parental support as demonstrated in a recent parents' questionnaire carried out in December 2021. Parents are welcomed to a range of events, and communication about the Catholic life of the school and RE is strong. The e-copy of the weekly Wednesday Word is distributed to parents and the knowledge organisers on the website provided detailed information on the RE curriculum. Links with the parish are very good; the local parish priest is very supportive of the school. The school has very good engagement with the diocese making full use of the services provided.

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

is outstanding

The mission statement, 'Growing together in God's love and care' dynamically expresses the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school. It makes a significant contribution to and impact on all policies and aspects of the school's daily life. The headteacher has a strong vision of Catholic education and how this challenges all to aspire to greatness. The Catholic life of the school is very well led by the headteacher and the leadership team. During the various lockdowns, the school worked hard to support pupils and parents, demonstrating the commitment to the education of young people. There are strong systems in place for induction and for staff professional development. The governors play an active role in the life of the school and provide effective support to the headteacher. They offer highly effective and excellent support and challenge to the leadership of the school in strategic matters. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of the strengths and areas for development and is based on rigorous monitoring and analysis. As a result, inspectors were able to validate the school's judgments of itself. This is an outstanding Catholic school.

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

- Further develop the pupil experience of prayer and liturgy by ensuring greater consistency across the year groups.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Hammersmith and Fulham.
- The school serves the parish of Holy Trinity, Hammersmith and other neighbouring parishes.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 46%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 25% and from other faiths is 15%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 70%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 5.
- There are 12% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 11 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 above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 85 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (27%).

Department for Education Number	205/3529
Unique Reference Number	100350
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	185
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Nicolette Moser
Headteacher	Miss Robina Maher
Telephone number	020 7603 7717
Website	www.stmarysrc.lbhf.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stmarysrc.lbhf.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 th November 2015
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Good
The 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 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.

Mr Matthew Dell

Lead Inspector

Miss Catherine Bryan

Associate Inspector

Mrs Margaret Hanley

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>

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