



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for Convent of Jesus and Mary Catholic Infant School

URN:101544

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster on:

Date: 19-20 January 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Pupils respond reverently and enthusiastically to prayer and worship.
- School leaders are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- The school's strong culture of welcome creates a joyful community for parents and families.
- Consistent feedback to pupils in religious education leads to outstanding progress and outcomes.

- Relationships throughout the school are nurtured through a firm commitment to the school's Catholic mission of 'becoming the people God wants us to be'.

What the school needs to improve:

- Use the implementation of the new *Religious Education Directory* to review and evaluate the current RE curriculum in time for 2025.
- Develop a planned programme for pupils to lead and evaluate worship across the school.
- Continue to support teachers in developing a high level of confidence in subject knowledge and expertise in the teaching of religious education.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade.....

1

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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Provision

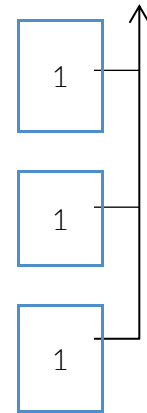
The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

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Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

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All members of the school community embrace the school's mission of 'Together, Thinking, Learning, Caring, Sharing, Becoming the people God wants us to be'. One staff member declared that 'we are a family and care deeply for each other, the families we serve and our children.' Pupils are guided and encouraged to become confident, inquisitive learners and they clearly flourish under the nurturing care they receive. Behaviour in all classes is excellent and pupils demonstrate a positive attitude in the respectful way they behave towards each other, both in lessons and around the school. The teaching of other faiths enables them to have a deep respect for those of other religions. Pupils place great value on their leadership roles and speak confidently about their impact, particularly regarding their role as Mini Vinnies. They talk proudly about their eagerness to apply for positions as well as the difference they make to their local, national and global communities. Supported charities include Cafod, the Catholic Children's Society, the Cricklewood Homeless Concern and Winston's Wish. Through their response to Catholic Social Teaching, the Mini Vinnies proactively seek opportunities to help those in need. One pupil stated, 'We do this so we can help others and teach others to do the same.' They have a clear understanding that they are following the teachings and example of Jesus.

There is a lived sense of community, a strong sense of welcome to various cultures and belief traditions and a striving to be exceptionally supportive to all members of the community, particularly the most vulnerable. The school has a belief that 'no child gets lost' and this is seen in practice in lessons. Relationships between staff members and between staff and pupils are very supportive. One staff member stated, 'We are like an extended family, helping each other

with prayer, love and understanding.' All staff are exemplary role models for pupils. Additional adults in classes work collaboratively with teachers and are fully involved in pupils' learning during religious education lessons. Support in small groups is regularly provided to engage pupils and help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the faith. As a result, pupils have a great sense of belonging and feel that they are valued. The school environment provides a wealth of high-quality displays and enriching experiences for pupils to access. Spaces for reflection and prayer have been created to engage and inspire pupils, such as the St Francis garden and Our Lady's grotto. The chapel has been re-claimed as part of the school's historic legacy. It has been renovated to provide a unique space for prayer and worship for the whole community. Each class has a beautiful prayer focus area which celebrates pupils' growing and learning in faith. The many signs of the school's Catholic character mean that pupils are constantly reminded that they belong to a loving faith community with Christ at its centre. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned and rooted in the teaching of the Church. The curriculum includes teaching about personal health, personal relationships and physical and emotional well-being and provides an holistic vision for human flourishing.

The head teacher, senior leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic Social Teaching. They demonstrate an exemplary commitment to caring for our common home. The chair of governors knows the school well and is ambitious for it. The RE link governor is active in the school's monitoring and review cycle. All leaders are dedicated, energetic and determined to ensuring that all are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. They are proactive in working with the diocese in developing policies, availing of professional development opportunities for staff and embracing new initiatives. There is a firm commitment by leaders to develop the Catholic life of the school. Parents share the leaders' commitment and actively participate in the school's prayer life, particularly in the Wednesday Word morning liturgy. One parent commented, 'I feel that the school strengthens our Catholic belief and practice at home.' The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school and Mass is celebrated in the chapel on a regular basis. The partnership with the parish is supported by the half-termly Sunday family Mass which is well-attended. Well-being days for staff demonstrate an exemplary commitment to pastoral care for staff. Leaders are highly committed to the professional development of all staff. A staff member commented, 'The love that is here is real and not just for children but adults too'.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1

Pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. They retain prior learning and can demonstrate a high level of religious literacy. Pupils can speak fluently and confidently about their learning. They love the challenge of learning and are supported exceptionally well, with careful planning and differentiated tasks. As a result, all pupils achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils are actively engaged in lessons. They can work collaboratively, helping each other to a better understanding of the assigned tasks, and they can also work independently to achieve success. Pupils are able to think for themselves and to make links in their learning. When asked to pray the 'Our Father', a Year 2 pupil asked, 'Why don't we sing it like we did in Year 1?' Whereupon, all pupils joined in singing the entire prayer together. Pupils are taught to use subject-specific vocabulary and to be curious. For example, children in Reception were immediately engaged when presented with a box with symbols of the Epiphany hidden inside (a crown and a star). In written work, pupils respond well to teachers' guidance. As a result, pupils' books and floor books are beautifully presented and demonstrate pupils' learning through a variety of creative opportunities. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and achievement in religious education is above-average compared to other core subjects.

Teachers are committed to the value of religious education and have high expectations. In the best lessons, teachers use questions skillfully, adapting tasks to lead pupils to a better understanding of their faith. Opportunities for challenge are available during the lessons, which help to motivate pupils. Progression in knowledge, skills and application is provided through thorough planning. Personalised targets in religious education are shared with parents. One parent remarked, 'I love that my child comes home from school happy, sharing wonderful things she has learnt about our faith.' Pupils express their learning through art, music and drama and in

a variety of planned activities. Good quality resources are provided to ensure that lessons are creative and engaging, and additional adults are used effectively so that all pupils are supported to achieve. In Nursery and Reception classes, pupils are able to independently and confidently access a range of activities in colourful, vibrant indoor and outdoor environments. They are also able to pray the 'Our Father' using Makaton signing. Teachers have an excellent understanding of how RE affects the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Scripture is fully embedded in all lessons and pupils are often encouraged to make links to their own lives. Teachers regularly plan activities to enable pupils to reflect on scripture, including opportunities to compose their own prayers. During a Year 2 lesson about the Sermon on the Mount, a pupil offered a reflection that Jesus was preaching on the mountain 'because He wanted to be closer to God'.

The religious education curriculum has been mapped in a stimulating and creative way so that pupils understand the impact of their way of life on the world they live in. Therefore, Pope Francis' encyclical, 'Laudato Si', is used to complement the curriculum and help pupils understand their call to action as stewards of the earth. The head teacher, religious education leader, link governor and all governors ensure that the subject enjoys full parity with other core subjects. Religious education is very well-resourced and all leaders are fully committed to providing high-quality, regular professional development for staff, enabling them to thrive as role models within a faith-filled community. The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision which she ably shares with others. She is very generous in sharing her expertise with teachers through coaching and modelling to ensure that the curriculum is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned with differentiation and progression to meet the needs of all pupils. Excellent links are forged with the diocese and other schools to moderate work, access training and keep up-to-date with new initiatives. Expected standards in teaching religious education across the school are routinely monitored and reviewed. Self-evaluation by leaders and governors ensures that areas for development in religious education are identified and acted upon. The head teacher and all leaders strive to maintain a focus on improvement and on providing the best possible experiences of learning in faith for the pupils in their care.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

.....

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

.....

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

Pupils are taught to show reverence and respect when praying and they are given many innovative and creative experiences of the richness of Catholic tradition. They are taught how to pray and how to make the Sign of the Cross. They can recite the 'Our Father', 'Hail Mary' and 'Glory Be' prayers confidently and enthusiastically. They are exposed to the daily ritual of prayer and are taught how to use quiet music, posture, silence, reflection and signing to make prayer times deeply meaningful. Traditional prayers, recited in a variety of languages, are used to enrich pupils' experience of prayer. Children are taught from Nursery to prepare a focus area for prayer using the signs and symbols of their faith: a cross, candle, statue, liturgical cloth and the Bible. Pupils know a variety of hymns which they can sing beautifully. Catholic Social Teaching is woven into class acts of worship. During a Year 2 class act of worship, pupils were challenged with the question, 'What can you do to help the poor?' In a Nursery class act of worship in the chapel, pupils and parents were given the mission, 'Go forth and promote peace.' Although there are assigned prayer leaders in every class, pupils are not yet given the opportunity to independently prepare, lead and evaluate worship.

The creative use of spaces within classrooms, corridors and outdoor areas ensures that children are surrounded by an inspirational and enhancing environment. A parent observed, 'We are so glad that our child is developing in the environment the teachers and school staff work so hard to create.' The recently renovated chapel is the hub of the school and is cherished by all members of the school community. There is a naturally embedded pattern of prayer in the school. All staff lead prayer thoughtfully and reflectively, providing exemplary modelling for the pupils. One staff member commented, 'We do all things with great love and dedication.' Scripture passages are carefully chosen to enhance pupils' experiences of prayer. Music is integral to prayer and liturgy. As a result, pupils' prayer times are full of energy and joy. Staff have worked hard to ensure that families are

included in the prayer life of the school. A travelling crib is shared with families during Advent to encourage family prayer at home. The Wednesday Word prayer sessions provide further opportunities for pupils, staff and parents to pray together. The centrality of prayer and liturgy is clearly evident in policies and plans and in discussions with staff, parents and pupils. There is a flourishing partnership with local parishes to help pupils participate in their communities. A naturally embedded pattern of prayer in the school ensures that pupils experience the breadth and richness of Catholic tradition.

Leaders, including governors, place the highest priority on the spiritual formation of staff, parents and pupils. They have invested in staffing and other resources to ensure that prayer and liturgy are given the highest priority. They understand the relationship between participation in prayer and ministry and strive to ensure that the community is growing in faith through prayer. It is well-planned and supported by inspirational leadership from the head teacher and subject leader for religious education. They support staff effectively to lead prayer and worship through clear guidance, using diocesan resources. A number of staff are completing the diocesan-led Foundation Stones course in order to further develop their understanding of the Catholic faith, including prayer and liturgy. Regular surveys of parents' and pupils' views are valued as part of the school's review and improvement cycle. Celebration of the Eucharist is offered to the whole school community at key times in the liturgical year and at significant moments within the life of the school, for example, the Year 2 leavers' Mass. Everyone has the opportunity to experience the broad range of ways of praying that are part of the Church's tradition. One member of staff commented, 'The school and community bring me closer to God every day.'

Information about the school

Full name of school	Convent of Jesus & Mary Catholic Infant School
School unique reference number (URN)	101544
Full postal address of the school	21 Park Avenue, London NW1 5AN
School phone number	0208 459 5890
Name of head teacher or principal	Miss Elsa Fonseca
Chair of governing board	Robert Allan
School Website	http://www.cjminfantschool.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	3-7 years
Trustees	N/A
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	23 June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Norah Flatley	Lead inspector
Mary Ainger	Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement