



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **Cardinal Pole Catholic School**

URN: 100285

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

Date: 20-21 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....

1

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education.....

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

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

- Cardinal Pole has a strong sense of community and inclusivity based on living out the values of Catholic Social Teaching.
- The leadership and vision of the head teacher, senior team and governors is inspirational; they are outstanding witnesses to the gospel in their direction of the school.
- Pastoral care is outstanding and there is a strong commitment by all members of the school community to help the most vulnerable.
- The Religious Education department is well run and achieves outstanding outcomes for pupils.
- Prayer is woven into the fabric of school life and leads pupils to a deeper understanding of their Christian faith.

What the school needs to improve

- Explore ways to better connect with those parents the school has identified as 'hard to reach'.
- When creating schemes of work for the RED, deepen opportunities for pupil creativity and independent learning.
- Ensure greater opportunities for all pupils in all year groups to prepare and lead prayer and worship.

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1

There is a distinct Catholic identity in Cardinal Pole which is apparent when you arrive and linked to everything the school does. The new mission statement focused around SOAR (Service, Opportunity, Aspiration, Reward) has recently been introduced and is widely known and applied by pupils and staff. Pupils are well looked after pastorally and they appreciate the care given to them by staff. The 'restorative justice' initiative is a key element in developing pupil self worth. There is a strong sense of community in this school; pupils are taught to be friendly and polite, and behaviour is very good. One parent also commented that 'Catholic life and mission help my child to behave well at home.' Pupils respond well to those in need. There is strong support for the local food and clothes bank and money is raised for Aid to the Church in Need, the SVP and CAFOD. Pupils are also able to articulate the theology underpinning their actions. Cardinal Pole serves a very diverse community, and there is a strong culture of respect for those of other faiths and none. The chaplaincy is active and visible in student life and pupils participate in a wide range of activities including Bible Study for Year 7, and a Faith and Action Group in Year 8.

There is very strong support for Catholic Life and Mission amongst staff with one saying, 'I believe we are a beacon of light in the community'. Professional development ensures that there is clarity on how the mission statement can be applied on a daily basis. The sense of community in this school is outstanding. Staff go the extra mile in helping pupils to achieve their full potential, and the most vulnerable are given outstanding support. The newly opened St Monica's Centre is an excellent example of inclusion, demonstrating clearly the most important values of Catholic education. The head teacher provides inspirational and visionary

leadership in this area. Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary; pupils highlighted to Inspectors the value they place on the efforts made by staff and the positive relationships that staff are keen to engender. The school environment is outstanding; the mission statement is highlighted everywhere and displays clearly illustrate the Catholic identity. There is a dedicated chapel which is well used and appreciated by all. The RSHE programme meets all the statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders in this school are fully committed to a distinctly Catholic vision of education. Governors are enthusiastic and place Catholic life and mission at the heart of all they do. The school works very closely with the diocese. Senior leaders are keen to assist colleagues in other Catholic schools and work closely with their local primary schools and neighbouring parishes. The head teacher and heads of year hold regular forum meetings online with parents and carers and such meetings help to cement a strong partnership with parents. The school is aware that there is a significant minority of parents who are harder to reach and the governors have acknowledged that this is an area for development. Catholic Social Teaching is lived at Cardinal Pole. The school generously funds a wide range of activities including providing free breakfasts and funding all trips, retreats and visits. Additional funding is also provided for families in hardship. Staff are very supportive of the efforts made by leaders to help ensure a positive work life balance. Governors understand fully their responsibility to hold senior leaders to account and provide appropriate challenge when necessary. Leaders know their school 'inside out' and rigorous self evaluation is at the heart of driving improvements in Catholic life across the school. The Sixth Form Catholic Life Leadership Team plays an important role in providing feedback and evaluation for leaders. Professional development is strong and comprehensive, and appreciated by staff.

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.....

1

Leadership

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

1

Pupils make excellent progress in religious education at Cardinal Pole. Exam results at both GCSE and A level show above average attainment and progress, and RE was the best performing GCSE subject in the school in 2022. In discussions with Inspectors almost all pupils said that they were surpassing their target grades. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and show excellent levels of religious literacy. They are engaged and enthusiastic in lessons, keen to participate and answer questions. Work is of a high quality and pupils know what they need to do to improve. A variety of enrichment activities, including visits from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, help pupils to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. A separate 'Nurture curriculum' enables vulnerable members of the community to make effective progress and there is strong progression through the key stages. Some independence is shown in the response to home learning tasks. However, when creating schemes of work for the RED the department should deepen opportunities for pupil creativity and independent learning. Core RE is well taught in the sixth form. One student commented on the central importance of RE : 'it is at the core of who we are as a school'.

Teachers at Cardinal Pole have high expectations of pupils and good subject knowledge. Lessons are fast paced and teachers ensure pupil progress through skilful questioning which is a particular strength of the school. Teacher feedback is timely and appropriate and pupils understand what they need to do to make progress. Staff are quick to correct pupil mistakes in lessons and this is done in ways that encourage and boost confidence. Teachers frequently and effectively revisit concepts to help reinforce key ideas. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent; in an observed lesson on gender equality the teacher demonstrated outstanding passion, commitment and creativity in pushing the pupils to deepen their

knowledge and understanding. The school provides Saturday morning lessons which are well attended, and student voice describes regular feedback, with Home Learning being marked very frequently. Support staff are well used in lessons and show excellent knowledge of the needs of the pupils. Catholic Social Teaching is central throughout. One sixth form student commented that the school had taught them to see what could be regarded as 'secular issues' through the eyes of faith, calling all 'to be more Christ-like'.

Leaders have ensured that the RE curriculum faithfully follows the Directory. Lessons are appropriately sequenced ensuring that subject content is developed systematically across the year groups. Sixth form core RE has recently been revamped and is much improved, with observed lessons focusing on lively student debate and discussion. All teachers in the RE Department are subject specialists and resourcing is on a par with other core subjects. Leaders help provide excellent professional development opportunities for staff both at school and diocesan level, and these are well received. The RE subject leader has successfully led on important recent improvements and staff talk warmly about the strong sense of family and togetherness in the department. There are excellent links with the diocese and other local schools. The head of RE and the Link Governor work closely together to ensure that governors are kept informed and that there is accurate challenge and target setting. Parents are very appreciative of the work done by the RE department with one parent commenting, 'Since arriving at Cardinal Pole, my son has not only found confidence in himself but in his faith'.

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

1

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



The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to engage in prayer and worship. The communal hymn singing at the end of assembly led by the music department is a particular strength and pupils commented on how much they enjoy the gospel choir. Pupils participate in a wide variety of prayer opportunities including exposition, Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the rosary in May and October and Stations of the Cross in Lent. Prayerful retreats for all pupils are well planned, and pupils work well with the chaplain and other adults to prepare liturgies. They are involved in evaluating worship but pupils could take a more proactive role in planning liturgies and assemblies. One Year 11 pupil spoke about how the many opportunities for worship makes Cardinal Pole different from other schools in the local area. Pupils from all key stages could talk about how prayer and liturgy make a difference to their lives. One sixth form student said that because of his time at the school he had 'the values and faith to go forward with the rest of his adult life'.

School life is based around the Church's liturgical calendar. All major feasts are celebrated with a Mass or liturgy and corresponding prayer. All staff meetings begin in prayer. Cardinal Pole is proud to be a worshipping community. Pupils were unanimous in describing morning prayer as central to the spiritual life of the school. They particularly enjoyed writing and reading out their own prayers, as they felt this gave them the opportunity to pray for their own concerns and those of the wider community, making the prayer relevant to their own lives. Each form room has its own custom made 'prayer box' which is well used by pupils and is an outstanding feature of the school. Inspectors observed an inspirational assembly by the head teacher linking the Resurrection with everyday life in Hackney. Staff at Cardinal Pole are models of exemplary practice and support for the Catholic life from the leaders is a real strength of the

school. The lay chaplain is new in post but is a real asset to the community and is well supported by her line manager and the head teacher. There is a wide selection of Christian art and iconography around the school. One pupil commented that he is constantly reminded that he is in a Catholic school just by looking around the building. There is a dedicated chapel, a prayer space for staff and pupils of other faiths and a shrine to Our Lady in the roof top garden. Families are invited regularly into school for prayer and scripture study; the school is looking at ways of increasing parental attendance and involvement in the future. The school has very good relationships with the local parishes and religious orders.

The policy on prayer and worship is carefully formulated and regularly reviewed. The Sixth Form chaplaincy team spoke about how they differentiated their assemblies on the beatitudes to make them accessible to different year groups. Mass is celebrated weekly on a voluntary basis; however, all year groups celebrate Mass together every half term. There is a real commitment to professional development. All new staff have relevant and high quality training and induction. Leaders have a very good knowledge of the Catholic tradition, and this is clearly articulated in the spiritual life of the community. As a result, prayer and liturgy are well delivered and central to the life and mission of the school. Pupil voice is a particular strength of the school and pupils are articulate and honest in their responses. There is absolutely no doubt that Cardinal Pole is a school that lives out its Catholicity.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Cardinal Pole Catholic School
School unique reference number (URN)	100285
Full postal address of the school	205 Morning Lane, London E9 6LG
School phone number	020 89855150
Name of head teacher or principal	Adam Hall
Chair of governing board	Justin Madubuko
School Website	www.cardinalpole.co.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age-range of pupils	11-19
Trustees	Diocese of Westminster
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Paul Higginson	Lead inspector
Martin Fahey	Team inspector
Carol Ransom	Team inspector
Elaine Warnett	Shadow 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