

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School

Wades Place, London, E14 0DE

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 30 June 2017



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The new religious education curriculum is well planned, fulfils the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and also covers other world religions.
- When pupils are challenged by searching questions in lessons and feedback, religious literacy improves and progress is rapid and sustained.
- Pupils display a consistently positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils enjoy religious education and are keen to share with their peers.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, resulting in pupils making good progress and achieving well over time.
- The newly appointed religious education leaders are planning effective steps to develop teaching, learning and assessment.
- The leadership of religious education is committed to raising standards in classroom religious education.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The marking and feedback procedure is not applied consistently and does not always promote stretch and challenge.
- Tracking of pupil progress is not always accurate or coherent.
- The structures and processes employed to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in religious education are not formalised.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- The senior leadership team, religious education leaders and governing body are passionate about the school and its Catholic identity.
- Religious education is well respected by the staff, pupils and parents.
- The buildings and outside space are bright and comfortable, thereby providing an ideal learning environment.
- The school is keen to provide an experience of prayer and worship that is rich, varied and collaborative.
- Pupils understand and respond to the Church's call to serve.
- The school promotes the Common Good and instils a sense of community in an impressive manner.
- The school has formed effective partnerships with parents, carers, parishes, schools and the diocese. These links have proved useful in shaping and developing the Catholic life.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- The school does not comply with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference that there should be 10% of curriculum time dedicated to religious education.
- Systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of prayer and collective worship need to be implemented.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Our Lady and St Joseph is a new school and, as such, has not been previously inspected.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The introduction of a new religious education (RE) curriculum has resulted in a programme with greater scope and the inclusion of other religions. The school is justly proud of its focus on diversity in lessons, the prayer room and in display work, particularly the 'Our Wonderful World' board. This work is now being embedded in the school, with time ensuring the development of an even wider range of resources to enhance the delivery of RE. The four strands of the Curriculum Directory are covered and clearly identified in the schemes of work. As the new RE programme is in its infancy there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to write in greater depth but the school's awareness of this has meant that it is a feature of their development plan.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is judged to be good overall because of the progress pupils make relative to their starting points and the consistently positive attitude pupils display to learning. Internal and diocesan moderation affirm teachers' judgements on levelling. Attainment in the last year is at least good and in most year groups better than other core subjects. Pupils' books provide evidence of good progress, especially in Year 6 where the extended writing in some books is impressive. However, pupils lower down the school should be afforded more opportunities to write in greater detail. Where pupils are challenged by searching questions in lessons and feedback, religious literacy improves and progress is rapid and sustained. The 'next-steps' marking required to further learning and attainment is not yet consistent across classes and needs further monitoring. The newly implemented cover for RE books signifies that they are special but greater attention needs to be given to the presentation of pupils' work to ensure consistency across the school.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching is consistently good, resulting in pupils making good progress and achieving well over time. Where teaching had the most impact on learning, such as in Year 1 and Year 5, tasks were differentiated and questioning stretched pupils to promote rapid progress. Careful monitoring of these learners and regular intervention during the lessons helped to develop a positive and cooperative environment. Pupils showed a clear interest in RE and were eager to share their work with their peers. In a Year 1 lesson, one pupil asked that his prayer to St Francis of Assisi be shared and in Year 2 the use of 'talk partners' enabled pupils to make thoughtful points about how they could build the kingdom of God. Where teaching was less effective, the pace of learning slowed and the lesson activities lacked extension and challenge. There is scope for higher levels of consistency across the key stages so that all pupils enjoy parity of experience. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils and want them to do well. The RE subject leaders make sufficient time for planning and make effective use of diocesan support to ensure that pupils' religious literacy is deepened. Some staff have strong subject knowledge, particularly the RE subject leaders, and this is helping to support other teachers and inspire confidence in the pupils. Support staff in the majority of lessons supported pupils well but they are not always used to best effect. Steps should be taken to ensure that there is greater clarity surrounding their role in RE lessons. Pupils' behaviour in almost all lessons was good and excellent in the classes where the tasks set were more engaging. Pupil assessment is regular but feedback is not always sufficiently detailed to guarantee that pupils know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The school is aware of this

and is taking steps to make certain that practice is consistent across the key stages. RE homework, when set, contributes to pupils' learning but it is not yet embedded across the school.

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

Leadership and management of religious education are good. The headteacher and two RE coordinators are relatively new in post but it is clear that there is a commitment to raising standards in classroom RE. Their positive impact can be most keenly felt in the classrooms where lessons are developmental and present progressively challenging content through the key stages. The introduction of the religious education blog on the website has helped to engage pupils and raised the profile of the subject. Non-Catholic pupils and members of staff are well supported by the RE leaders through planning and training. It is evident that the school's mission statement, 'With Christ at our Centre, we love, listen and learn' underpins the work of the school. Systems and procedures are starting to be put in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure staff training and development needs are met. However, these need to be more formal and greater attention needs to be given to record keeping. The school's own self-evaluation is accurate in some places but the judgements for each section of classroom religious education are inflated. The chair of governors plays a major role in the school and is well informed about the progress and development of RE. Equally, the RE link governor is heavily involved in school life and regularly visits lessons. He clearly recognises areas for development and improvement and is keen to work with the school to continue the drive for improvement.

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

- Embed and monitor further the marking and feedback procedure to ensure consistency and the promotion of stretch and challenge.
- Review the tracking of pupil progress to ensure accurate and coherent data is recorded.
- Formalise the structures and processes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in RE.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Our Lady and St Joseph is new school and, as such, has not been previously inspected.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

Pupils are offered a quality and experience of religious education that is good. While curriculum time for religious education does not fully meet the Bishops' Conference requirement for 10%, the shortfall is minimal and the school intends to remedy this for September. The school was opened in 2014 in a brand-new building that is bright, vibrant and inviting. Careful thought was given to the school's Catholic identity and as such a prayer garden and prayer room complete with a hand painted mural by a staff member provide peaceful and useful spaces for pupils and staff. Similarly, the hall with its commissioned, hand carved crucifix provides a focal point for collective worship. The school is keen to continue to further develop the iconography around the school. Particularly impressive features of the school are the beautiful displays and examples of children's work all around the building. RE is very well resourced and a generous budget, in line with other core subjects, is allocated every year. The leadership team and governors are fully committed to the development of RE and, to that end, ensure that opportunities for training and staff development are readily available.

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

is good

Prayer and worship are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school. A range of carefully planned thematic worship opportunities are offered to staff and pupils throughout the school year. For instance, during May, pupils are invited to pray the rosary and visit the prayer garden. Prayer and worship are dominant features of daily life, with the day opening and closing with prayer. During the inspection, staff briefing opened with song, scripture and the day's mission which was in part replicated in class worship. This shared experience of prayer and reflection helps to build the sense of community in the school. To aid prayer and reflection further, each classroom is equipped with a well-resourced and maintained prayer table and bespoke prayer book. Pupils, staff and parents are regularly invited to celebrate Mass both at the school and at the local parish church. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available for pupils in school during Lent and Advent. Pupils are actively involved in both the preparation and leadership of worship which is linked to the liturgical calendar. The school's emphasis on Gospel values strengthens pupils' moral and spiritual development. To further improve the experience of Catholic worship, the quality and opportunities for prayer and worship should be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

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

is good

The school's commitment to the Common Good and social justice is good. There is a definite sense of community in the school which is enriched by the school's celebration of its diversity and its involvement in the wider community. The emphasis on inclusion, grounded in the knowledge that all human beings are created equal and made in the image and likeness of God, promotes positivity and equality. Pupils' understanding of the Church's call to action for justice and peace was most recently demonstrated by their response to the Grenfell Tower disaster. Pupils are keen to support those in need locally, nationally and globally by both raising awareness and fund raising. The school supports a considerable number of charities, including the homeless shelter in the St Matthias Centre where the

pupil-led chaplaincy volunteer once a term. Discussion with pupils shows that they are growing in their understanding of the call to serve and the theology which underpins this notion. Pupils are offered many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and respond to these very positively. The school supports pupils well in developing their gifts and talents and these are celebrated through assembly and the newly implemented house point system.

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 good

The school's partnership with parents, parish, other Catholic schools and the diocese is good. The feedback from the parents' questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted that there is great faith in the school's ability to provide a highly effective Catholic education. The school welcomes dialogue with parents and at every opportunity invite them to attend liturgies and events. The local parish priest serves as the school's chaplain and a member of the governing body. The pupils, staff and parents benefit from his very regular visits to the school and lessons. The local bishop also makes regular visits to the school and celebrates Mass. The senior leadership team (SLT) and RE subject leaders regularly attend training organised by the diocese and the school has fostered good relations with their diocesan advisor. Year 6 pupils take part in a deanery retreat day with other schools from the borough and this year the school took responsibility for planning and delivering the retreat. The school also hosts an interfaith evening where local religious leaders are invited to the school to talk to pupils and parents.

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

is good

The headteacher together with the SLT, RE leaders and governing body are fully committed to the Catholic mission of education. There is a sustained effort to make the Gospel relevant and real in the lives of pupils, staff and parents. The governing body share in the strategic leadership of the school with energy and enthusiasm. The chair of governors and parish priest, as former pupils of the pre-existing primary, have seen the school go from strength to strength and are tireless in the time and commitment they give. Effective training and reflection opportunities are presented to staff to enable them to examine the distinctive nature of Catholic education and their role within it. The school is becoming more adept at self-evaluation and, as such, detailed development plans will continue the drive for improvement.

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

- Implement the requirement of the Bishops' Conference so that all pupils have their weekly entitlement to 10% classroom religious education.
- Develop and implement systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of prayer and collective worship.

Information about this school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Poplar
- The school serves the parishes of St Mary and St Joseph, Poplar and Our Lady Immaculate and St Frederick's, Limehouse.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 76%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 15% and from other faiths is 3%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 68%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 5.
- There are 20% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 15 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.
- 171 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (40%).

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| Department for Education Number | 211/2006 |
| Unique Reference Number | 139423 |
| Local Authority | Tower Hamlets |

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 -11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 425 |
| The appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Teresa Parker |
| Headteacher | Mr Patrick Devereux |
| Telephone number | 020 3764 8860 |
| Website | http://www.olsj.towerhamlets.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@olsj.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | N/A |
| Grade from previous inspection | N/A |

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 10 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly and 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 Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

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Lead Inspector

Mrs Deirdre Finan

Associate Inspector

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Associate Inspector

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