

St Francis de Sales Catholic Junior School

Brereton Road, Tottenham, London N17 8DA



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 26 January 2018

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The leadership of religious education is good in this school. The executive headteacher sets high expectations for his staff and challenges them to attain high standards of learning.
- The content of the religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Teaching overall is good. Some teachers encourage creative work that stimulates and develops pupils' learning. Behaviour of pupils all around the school is outstanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are being well supported and make good progress.
- Pupil's speaking and listening skills in religious education are well developed by Year 6.
- The governing body are being well led and provide a good balance of challenge and support to the junior school.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Attainment of children on entry to Year 3 is below the national average. Almost half of pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with levels of attainment below age expectation. This requires improvement.
- Opportunities for developing extended writing skills in religious education are being missed in Key Stage 2. Work and tasks provided are often not sufficiently challenging especially for the higher ability pupils.
- Assessment and monitoring systems are not secure and lack rigour.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The leadership of the executive headteacher and the governing body in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding.
- 10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week, as required by the Bishops' Conference.
- The work the school does around the development of the Common Good is exemplary. This school genuinely understands the call to human flourishing.
- Pupil knowledge of the messages and teaching of Jesus and of St Francis de Sales is highly developed. Pupil also know about inspirational people and the theology that underpins their actions.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are judged to be good. There are extensive opportunities within the school for daily collective worship and prayer.
- Children at all ages and all key stages play an active part in prayer and liturgy in a wide variety of ways.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully fostered in this school.
- Parents are highly supportive of the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The school is committed to partnerships and good relationships with parents, local schools, the parish and the diocese.
- This is a school that proudly proclaims its Catholic life in a rich and diverse way. It is clearly outstanding in this respect.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The main area of improvement since the last inspection has been the formation of a religious education (RE) leadership team. This has resulted in a greater sense of collective responsibility for the leadership and management of RE. The governing body and the headteacher have worked on developing a vision of high expectations and associated values. The governing body have re-constituted and both schools in the federation now work much more closely together. Information and assessment provided by the infant school is now moderated and discussed more closely. Extensive training for new staff and non-Catholic teachers has been provided. The school has also worked on new systems of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, knowledge and understanding.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of the St Francis de Sales Catholic Junior School religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). There is one core RE scheme from Year 3 to Year 6. The curriculum is planned by the RE leadership team. There is some evidence to show creativity in the teaching and learning of RE in some classes. Pupils are being taught about other faiths, including Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. The school has invested in a range of resources linked to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory such as Bibles. The structure, planning and content of this school's RE curriculum and in class lessons is thorough. The junior pupils get rich opportunities to learn about saints and inspirational people such as Oscar Romero, Maximillian Kolbe and Martin Luther King. The liturgical year and calendar is being closely matched to pupils' learning. The curriculum gives the junior pupils a good opportunity to learn about many aspects of their Catholic faith. The programmes of study for Key Stage 2 are clearly mapped out.

Pupil achievement in religious education requires improvement

Attainment on entry to Year 3 is below the national average with around half the pupils entering below the national age expectations. Pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with skills, knowledge and levels of attainment where broadly half are still below that expected at their age. Therefore attainment and progress are judged to require improvement. Standards in RE are not comparable to standards in other core subjects. Pupils are not being given the opportunity to develop their extended writing skills. Standards of written work are broadly average in this school but in some classes coverage is weak. Speaking and listening skills are much higher however. This was evident when a group of Year 6 pupils were interviewed. They were very articulate and showed high levels of religious literacy and knowledge. They spoke confidently and with detailed knowledge about world religions. Three pupils spoke at length about saints such as St Paul and St Theresa of Calcutta. One pupil spoke about: 'the shining sacrifice, love and example' shown by Maximillian Kolbe. Pupils' writing shows clear progress in Years 5 and 6 with some good examples of extended writing being provided. However there is not evidence of this for all pupils especially those who are higher attaining. Currently very few pupils are assessed as being above national expectations for their age. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are being well supported in their learning. Pupils are assessed at the end of each topic. Pupils' progress is tracked and used to measure attainment and progress at the end of each term. The school's tracking and assessment systems are not however currently secure or accurate; these systems have not yet been fully reviewed in the ways they measure attainment and progress in the junior school.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching in this junior school is good. Teaching is judged to be at least good in all classes. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils; some do not yet provide enough challenge and extension work. Teachers do not always give clear guidance on how pupils could improve their work but are developing useful dialogues with older pupils in this regard. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are starting to learn how to improve their work and the school recognises this as an area for further development. Planning is thorough and this ensures that pupils of all abilities are able to engage with the lessons. Teachers overall have good subject knowledge of RE in the junior school and are committed to delivering a good standard of education. This is most clearly in evidence when one observes teachers using effective questioning with pupils which is a regular feature of some lessons but is variable. Support staff have a key role in behaviour management and also in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school does monitor the quality of teaching but reviewing recent records shows that the school would benefit from external moderation of its overall judgements and observations. The process currently is not rigorous or objective enough. Behaviour of pupils in lessons, playgrounds and all around the school and at all times is excellent. This is a noteworthy feature of this junior school. Homework is regularly provided and is appreciated by both parents and the pupils. This was evidenced by the response of parents to a detailed questionnaire where the key role of homework was mentioned.

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

The leadership of religious education is good in this school. The executive headteacher sets high expectations for his staff and challenges them effectively to attain these high standards. He is currently also supporting another school in a different London borough. He is supported by an RE leadership team who all play a key role in promoting religious education within the school. There are structures in place to assess RE as a subject. At this moment in times these systems are not secure. The school is reasonably accurate in its own self-evaluation (SEF). For example the school itself identified the following issue in its SEF: 'One area of development identified through monitoring is that staff need to be much more rigorous in their expectations of work completed in RE books.' This inspection affirms this key finding. The school is active in moderating pupils work at a deanery level and staff attend all diocesan meetings relevant to the development of RE. Training and professional development for staff is plentiful and available to all staff. The governing body is being well led by a committed, knowledgeable and realistic chair and the parish priest also plays a key role in the work of the governing body.

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

- Raise standards of attainment and progress in RE so that by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are working at levels expected for their ages.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to practice their extended writing skills in RE books and provide more guidance on how to further improve their work.
- Review its assessment systems for teaching and learning in RE to ensure rigour and accuracy.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has successfully addressed all areas for improvement outlined in the previous report. Parents are more involved in their children's Catholic life by receiving more useful information. The school has introduced the Wednesday Word and also a termly newsletter about the school's RE work and acts of worship. The school itself has highlighted the increased opportunities for pupils to participate in acts of liturgy and worship as being a key development.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding

10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week. RE resources are plentiful and have been chosen to cover all areas of the curriculum. The school self-evaluation states that: 'All the school's systems, processes, vision and values are focused placing Jesus Christ at the centre of all we do. As a result children 'preach the Gospel' through behaviours more than words.' This inspection confirms that the school is successful in this area. All junior pupils knew the prayers of St Francis and the key values of the school. Staff development training is planned for and is encouraged in this school.

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

Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are judged to be good. There are extensive opportunities within the school for daily collective worship and prayer. All classes have prayer areas, a prayer focus and appropriate liturgical colours for the year. Displays of work and around the school are of a very high standard especially in the junior school. There are some fine examples of artwork, crosses and displays produced by the pupils. Children at all ages and all key stages play an active part in prayer and liturgy in a wide variety of ways. All Key Stage 2 pupils know the prayers of St Francis de Sales and were eager to recite them to inspectors. Evidence of a well-developed prayer and liturgical life in the school is clear from the school's website which also links to the local parish church. Prayer and worship are integral to the daily life of the school. There is a planned programme of prayer and morning assemblies. The school re-enacts the Nativity annually to which parents and the parish community are invited to attend, in the parish church. During Lent all pupils join together to re-enact the Stations of the Cross through drama, art and music. Music and drama are used effectively in assemblies and worship. Pupils do have the opportunity to lead and participate in these, particularly during Friday assemblies. This is an aspect the school wishes to develop further.

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

This is a major strength of the school and is judged to be outstanding. The school genuinely understands the call to 'human flourishing' in its broadest sense. 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 school has forged strong partnerships with a number of agencies who they support annually. Among these agencies are Catholic Children's Society Lenten Appeal, Cafod, local senior citizens club and Mission Together. Pupils also sponsor a child in Kenya in her education in a long term sustainable project. One area that must be noted in this inspection report is the work being developed to support the older people in the local community. The school runs an over 60's Lunch Club who share lunch with the school councillors in the school dining hall once every week.

The school councillors have negotiated free lunch with the school's lunch provider and they now host this group most Thursdays. Some of these guests now stay on to read with groups of children in the school. This is an exemplary example of the Common Good in action. Pupils are developing understanding of some of the moral issues of the day and are eager to do good works in the world and be of service. The school's Mini-Vinnies are thriving and pupils want to carry this work on. In an interview Year 6 pupils spoke in a moving fashion about the tragedy at Grenfell Tower and how they raised money to support those in need. The messages of St Francis de Sales are shared widely across this junior school.

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

This area is also a strength of the school. The school is committed to partnerships and good relationships with parents, local schools, the parish and the diocese. A parents' survey and questionnaire elicited a huge response in a short period of time. Parents are almost overwhelming in their support for the school and its leadership. The RE leadership team attend all relevant diocesan events and the school participates in deanery meetings when they occur. Links with the local parish church are equally very strong. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school and plays a key role in the Catholic life of the community. Assemblies focus on the Gospel reading from the Sunday Mass. St Francis de Sales considers itself to be a part of the ecclesial community of the Diocese of Westminster and sees itself a valuable and committed Catholic school within the London Borough of Haringey and Diocese of Westminster. The headteacher is currently supporting school improvement in another Catholic school in the Diocese.

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

is outstanding

The leadership of the executive headteacher and senior leaders in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Their vision and values to promote the Catholic life of the school are shared by the whole school community. The governing body is being well led by an experienced and knowledgeable chair of governors. Governors make a significant contribution to the work and Catholic life of the school. Pupils' own voices are articulate in this junior school and pupils enjoyed talking about their school. They are rightly proud and happy to be attending such a caring and committed Catholic school. The schools' own self-evaluation of Catholic life is very accurate. This inspection team judged them to be outstanding overall in its Catholic life.

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

- Develop further the opportunities for pupil initiated prayer and worship.

Information about this school

- The school is a 3-form entry Catholic junior school (part of an infant/junior federation) in the locality of Haringey.
- The school serves the parish of St Francis de Sales, Tottenham.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 91%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 8% and from other faiths is 1%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 58%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 6.
- There are 23% 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.
- 111 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (32 %).

Department for Education Number	309 3501
Unique Reference Number	102143
Local Authority	Haringey

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	7 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	348
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Geraldine Normoyle
Headteacher	Dr James Lane
Telephone number	0208 808 2923
Website	www.sfds.haringey.sch.uk/
Email address	head.federation@SFDS.haringey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25th March 2013
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 12 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 Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mr Sean Flood	Lead Inspector
Mrs Monica McCarthy	Shadow Lead Inspector
Ms Grace Anderson	Associate Inspector
Mrs Norah Flatley	Associate Inspector
Ms Aisling Meehan	Associate Inspector
Mrs Ruth Sykes	Associate Inspector

Diocesan inspection has four grades:

- outstanding
- good
- requires improvement
- causing concern

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