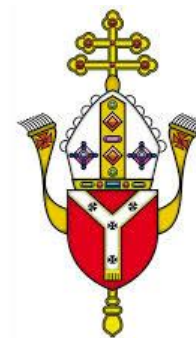


# Our Lady of Grace Catholic Junior School

Dollis Hill Lane NW2 6HS

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 8 March 2018



## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### A. Classroom religious education is good

- The leadership and management of classroom religious education are judged to be good over time.
- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- The school aims for creativity in its religious education curriculum. Books observed during this inspection contained examples of the effective use of artwork.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and leaders are highly effective in mentoring newly qualified teachers.
- Good cross-curricular links are made and outcomes in religious education are in line with those of other core subjects such as English.
- Feedback is consistent and pupils know what to do to improve their work.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education, they are confident in their use of religious vocabulary.
- Teaching is consistently good and on occasion outstanding, resulting in highly articulate pupil discussions where scripture references were used effectively to illustrate a viewpoint.

### Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The more able pupils are not yet provided with further opportunities to deeply explore their learning.
- Targets are beginning to be shared at the beginning of a series of lessons to ensure assessment is robust and meaningful for pupils.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are judged to be outstanding. The commitment of the headteacher and senior team to promoting Catholic life is evident in all aspects of this school.
- 10% of the curriculum time is devoted to religious education and so meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- It is evident to all that religious education is at the heart of this school and pupils are provided with ample opportunities to take part in designing their own worship.
- Children get an extensive introduction to a wide variety of prayers and use them effectively in their assemblies, liturgies and for personal prayer.
- Displays around the school are vibrant and creative and have Christ at the centre.
- Our Lady of Grace is a strong Catholic community with highly developed relationships between home, school and parish.
- Governors are actively engaged in promoting the Catholic life of the school and are committed to continuous improvement.
- The leadership team is strongly committed to promoting the common good as is evident in displays around the school.
- Parents and pupils are proud of their school community.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the school has worked to ensure that planning in religious education is creative and this has been fully implemented across the school. Children understand what they need to do to improve their work and questioning is targeted to challenge higher ability pupils.

### The content of classroom religious education is good

The school has ensured that the content of the religious education (RE) curriculum meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). Lessons are creative and good cross-curricular links are made with art, English writing and in homework opportunities. A variety of teaching strategies are used; the use of different genres and extended pieces of writing support this approach ensuring pupils across all year groups are motivated and engaged. There is good evidence of the transference of literacy skills to writing in religious education. The use of poetry, song and drama to promote creativity is particularly effective. Pupils in this school have lots of opportunities to show creativity in religious education lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and this has created a learning environment that fosters opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful discussions on a variety of topics. Pupils are provided with good feedback and use this opportunity to further improve work. In a Year 3 class observed, the teacher skilfully used partner talk and probing questions to challenge the children to delve deeper and was rewarded with an answer that referenced Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration as a pupil knowledgeably illustrated the point being made. The teacher's very strong subject knowledge enabled pupils to investigate this point further and relate this learning back to the lesson.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils achieve well in religious education and this achievement is in line with other core subjects such as English. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the liturgical year, they are able to use scripture references when engaging in class discussion. In a Year 6 class where pupils were studying the miracle of the loaves and fishes, pupils were able to discuss the implications of this miracle on the crowds that came to listen to Jesus. Pupils in this school are confident in their use of religious language. Pupils say that they like religious education lessons, they like to hear about people who have dedicated their life to God and gave Solomon praying for wisdom as an example. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and they take great pride in their religious education books. In a Year 5 class pupils were able to explain how they responded to feedback from their teachers. They demonstrated they could find examples in work where they had responded to feedback and edited their work. Pupils' attitude to learning is good and this was evident during class discussion, they clearly display a desire to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

### The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good with some examples of outstanding practice resulting in most pupils making good progress over time. It is evident that teachers have strong subject knowledge coupled with high expectations. Lessons are creatively planned to stimulate and engage pupils. Pupils are given time to reflect and time to discuss their ideas in their lessons. This clearly impacts on the quality of answers provided. Pupils value these opportunities and are able to express their views about their learning in a very positive manner. Pupils also commented on how much they enjoy having religious education lessons outside in nature as well as those lessons where they are actively involved in 'Godly Play'. The school has worked hard to track pupil progress in religious education and this has impacted on lesson planning resulting in any gaps in learning being effectively addressed. Feedback is consistent throughout the school and pupils are knowledgeable about their next steps in

learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and contribute well to learning in religious education. In a Year 4 class the lesson began with an image of footprints in the sand linking previous learning in a reflective manner. The class teacher used an analogy of 'filling my bucket' to enable pupils to consider their Lenten responsibilities in a way that was meaningful and effective for learning. Questions were open ended and pupils were engaged and on task. Mini plenaries were used effectively to address misconceptions and refocus learning.

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

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a long standing commitment to raising standards in religious education and are effectively mentoring a new religious education subject leader who took up post in September. It is evident that this team, together with the religious education governor have high expectations, they strive for excellence and work collaboratively to promote high standards in the school. The governor for religious education is actively involved in the school and has an excellent understanding of the evident strengths in this subject as well as areas for development. It is clear that this is a team that works collaboratively and rigorously to promote high standards. They model excellent practice supporting and encouraging staff resulting in a whole school approach to the teaching of religious education that reflects creativity and a dedication to the mission of the school. The new subject leader has been very well supported in her role, strong links with Our Lady of Grace Infant School ensure continuity. The leadership team has been very effective in ensuring that religious education has equal weighting on the school tracking system. This in turn has impacted on gap analysis discussions during pupil progress meetings resulting in focused planning continuing to raise standards in religious education. The subject leader plans, assesses and moderates with new members of staff ensuring that the shared vision for religious education impacts on outcomes for pupils. It is evident that leadership is very strong, purposeful and rigorous.

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

- Encourage pupils to become more independent in lessons by linking targets to learning over a series of lessons.
- Challenge the more able in RE and deepen learning experiences for this group of pupils.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

Excellent links are in evidence between home, school and parish. Parents value assemblies and regard them as thought provoking. They speak highly of the involvement of the parish priest in the life of the school. The school has provided pupils with opportunities to initiate and plan liturgies and readily shares its practice with other Catholic schools.

### 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 every week. It is evident to all who enter into this school that religious education is at its heart. Displays are vibrant and have Christ at the centre, religious education is well resourced. The high quality entrance hall display board is visually stimulating. The 'Picturing Jesus' display provides pupils with opportunities to offer their own interpretation. The result is that the visitor is left in no doubt about the place of Christ in this school. An artist in residence worked with pupils to create opportunities to participate in 'Mary Pictures' where pupils used different media to represent the symbolism of the immaculate heart. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education. The governors, together with the leadership team offer outstanding support in the development of Catholic life.

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

**is outstanding**

Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school, pupils engage in a wide variety of prayer and the parish priest is a regular visitor. Pupils have been introduced to contemplative prayer focusing on an African image of Jesus. They have also contemplated a statue of a homeless Jesus to further investigate issues of social justice. Pupils value opportunities to visit the 'Peace Garden' and write their own prayers to hang on the 'Peace Tree'. An assembly observed on the theme of the stewardship of God's world was well attended by the parish priest and parents, who together with pupils and staff, all engaged in traditional prayer and supported a child led reflection. A high level of preparation has resulted in pupils who are confident to lead worship and use technology to enhance the experience for participants. Pupils are highly adept at linking Pope Francis' comments to illustrate their themes during worship. The parish priest produced evidence during the inspection of artwork created by pupils for the parish church. The spiritual experience for parishioners attending Mass is enhanced by reflective opportunities provided by pupils' art. This adds to a very strong sense of community.

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

**is outstanding**

The school actively seeks to promote the Common Good at all times. Children demonstrate the greatest respect for each other and value each other as individuals. A parent of a child with additional needs commented that her child has grown in confidence, has improved interaction with peers and has flourished in this school. Pupils study Hinduism and take part planned visits to the Neasden Temple, they also study Judaism and have opportunities to take part in Judaism workshops. The school promotes British Values in its wider curriculum. This inspection took place during 'Waste Week' where recycling and stewardship were the main themes. These themes were linked to Cafod and Pope Francis' call to feed the poor. Pupils keenly expressed this theme through drama and used technology effectively to convey their message a manner that was highly entertaining. The

role of the school caretaker in pupils' news bulletin on stewardship is evidence of an inclusive community committed to the Common Good. Parents and pupils are proud of their school community. The local community links with this school are a strength as evidenced by observed commitment to fundraising for local causes. Pupils, and in particular, the recently established 'Mini-Vinnies' are actively engaged in choosing focus charities for fundraising.

**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**

Our Lady of Grace Juniors is a strong Catholic community. Relationships between home, school and parish are highly developed. One parent said 'assemblies here are thought-provoking and very moving'. They particularly enjoy the 'purposeful messages and calming, positive nature of the headteacher's talks at assembly'. Another parent commented that this is a 'listening school'. Parents welcome the communication app used between parents and school and state that this school prepares pupils well for society today. These very positive comments are echoed by all parents encountered during the inspection. The school has fostered these links very effectively. This is evident in the use of prayer bags during Lent and Advent to promote prayer during these liturgical seasons. Pupils and their families have had opportunities to write their own prayers and reflections to share with others in school.

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

**is outstanding**

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of this school are judged to be outstanding. The whole school community is fully committed to the Church's mission in education and the commitment of the headteacher, the RE governor and the senior team to promote the Catholic life of the school is evident in all aspects of school life. Leaders accurately evaluate the strengths of the Catholic life and ensure the school is a vibrant and engaging place in which pupils can grow in their faith. There are excellent systems in place to support new staff and the school mission statement, which is clearly understood by all, underpins every aspect of life in this school.

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

- Deepen the pupils' theological understanding that underpins the Common Good.

## Information about this school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic junior school in the locality of Brent.
- The school serves the parish of St Andrew and St Mary in Dollis Hill, The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 1% and from other faiths is 0%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 90%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is six.
- There are 15% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom eight 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 an average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- Fifty two pupils receive the Pupil Premium (22%).

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	3043500
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101538
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 -11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	235
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nigel Green
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steve McGrath
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 4506002
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ourladyofgracejuniors.co.uk">www.ourladyofgracejuniors.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@ologjuniors.brent.sch.uk">admin@ologjuniors.brent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2013
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Good
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	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 eight lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one assembly
- 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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Associate Inspector

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