

St Raphael Catholic Primary School

Hartfield Avenue, Northolt. UB5 6NL.

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 13 June 2018

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils



A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- Religious education makes a strong contribution to the Catholic life of the school.
- The headteacher, senior leadership and religious education team have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning in religious education across the school.
- The school's strong Catholic identity permeates all aspects of the learning environment of the school.
- The highly effective delivery of the curriculum in religious education, clearly linked to the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory, is providing effective provision in religious education.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons that are both creative and engaging. They have high expectations of pupils.
- The pupils are actively engaged in their learning and make effective links between their knowledge and their faith journey.
- Pupils get a good start to their learning in the early years and there are well versed in religious language from their start at St Raphael's.
- Pupils are confident and articulate users of religious vocabulary and illustrate excellent knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability.
- The SEF provides an accurate evaluation of the strengths and areas for development and there is evidence of action already being taken.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school's overall effectiveness in this area is outstanding.
- Religious education is given high status and is at the heart of the curriculum.
- Religious education receives its full allocation of 10% taught at each key stage and thus meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The senior leadership team and staff have ensured that commitment to its Catholic identity is evident in all aspects of the work of the school.
- The school's mission statement 'As we walk with Jesus we love, live and learn' permeates all aspects of school's life.
- Pupils spoke with immense pride about their Catholic identity and the call to serve the Common Good through their engagement with a number of charities and their awareness of helping those in need.
- Pupils are committed through their actions to supporting a wide range of activities on both a local, national and international level.
- There are opportunities for a variety of worship including Mass, liturgies and collective worship.
- Partnerships between home, school, parishes and the wider Catholic community are outstanding.
- Parents feel supported in all aspects of school life and say that the pastoral care is exceptional.
- Leadership and management of the school are outstanding and the governors make a highly significant contribution to the work and the Catholic dimension of the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a number of significant changes. A new headteacher has been appointed and together with an expanding leadership team has made several strategic changes to the life of the school. The school has developed a curriculum for religious education (RE) which ensures rigorous structure to the study of scripture and this has allowed pupils the opportunity to secure more pupils achieving Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at Key Stage 2. They have developed higher order questioning skills and opportunities for more independent research and this was evident in the classroom. The use of art has enriched the teaching and learning of RE and has aided visual literacy. The use of 'solo taxonomy' as a technique for encouraging pupils to think critically has influenced planning in RE to ensure work is being differentiated and achieve greater depth in RE. Religious literacy is outstanding which was evidenced in discussion with pupils and in lessons.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom religious education throughout all key stages meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). The curriculum meets pupils' learning needs in a creative and engaging way. Pupils were attentive, respectful and engaged due to a high quality of teaching – using drama, art and information technology. The impact of using 'solo taxonomy' has been evident in that more challenges have been added to the RE curriculum. Pupils understood what was expected of them and what they need to do to improve. Work was clearly differentiated and pupils were stretched and challenged. Nearly all lessons we observed pupils made excellent progress. The programmes of study and schemes of work illustrates where, how and when the appropriate content from the RECD is taught and assessed. Clear assessment opportunities linked to the agreed levels of understanding are built into each topic. Topics lead on from one another and this enables pupils to think creatively to ensure the curriculum is both dynamic and engaging. The school has improved in the teaching of world faiths since their last inspection. The pupils were extremely positive about their RE lessons and see RE as an important part of their lives. A Year 4 pupil commented, 'My RE lessons help me to get closer to Jesus' and several pupils confirmed that RE was their favourite subject because as they learned more about God it helped them strengthen their faith.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupil achievement and progress across the school is outstanding. In all key stages pupils achieve a high standard in RE. Pupils are provided with outstanding written and oral feedback across the whole school and know how to improve. Pupils do very well due to high expectations from teachers and well planned lessons are very engaging. The number of pupils achieving a Level 3 and 5 is increasing and these levels are quality assured through moderation. Pupils are aware of the level they are working at, their targets and what they need to do to achieve this. The school uses the national levels of attainment well to track pupils throughout each year group. Moderation at school, deanery and diocesan levels confirms teacher judgements and has ensured a shared understanding of assessment levels across the staff. Pupils display a high level of religious literacy and are able to articulate their excellent knowledge and understanding in age appropriate manner. All pupils are engaged and proactive in their learning and know what they have to do to improve and reach the higher tasks. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, articulate and confident users of religious literacy. They illustrate an excellent knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age, ability, applying a wide variety of skills to great effect in their work. They actively participate in lessons and really enjoy RE.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

The quality of teaching across the school is outstanding. Teaching is creative, inspiring and actively engages pupils in their learning and teachers use a variety of teaching methods. Teachers have high expectations, plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' religious literacy and create a positive climate for learning. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were asked to compare a disciple and martyr. Pupils worked independently on differentiated tasks and made real progress in the lesson. Planning has become more creative and learning is closely aligned to levels as outlined in the Agreed Understandings. Pupils were confident to ask questions; this was evident in a Year 3 lesson on Bible passages and a Year 5 lesson on discipleship. The pupils were able to talk confidently about what a disciple was and were articulate about their learning. There was clear and precise teacher feedback to pupils on how best to improve their work. Pupils know how well they are doing and respond positively to this feedback. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and teaching assistants are well deployed especially in the early years to support pupils in lessons. Pupils commented that they enjoyed RE and they were interested and engaged in lessons. Homework and marking was effective and pupils responded to comments made by teachers in exercise books.

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

The leadership and management of religious education are outstanding. The head teacher and senior leadership team work hard to create a dynamic and creative vision for religious education in which staff and pupils consistently strive for excellence. The school's Mission statement is central to all aspects of the school curriculum. The RE team has a strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the church and its impact on the daily life of the school. Religious education is given the highest priority and has explored ways to include creativity and opportunities for cross curricular links, particularly in art and music. Highly effective systems and structures are in place to frequently monitor, track and ensure pupil progress in religious literacy. Sound subject knowledge is continually developed through on-going professional development and staff are well supported in this. The senior leaders are excellent role models who lead by example. Governors fulfil their responsibilities and are influential in determining its Catholic direction.

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

- To embed the use of 'solo taxonomy' as a technique to ensure more pupils achieve greater depth.
- A focus on the presentation of work in books.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school enjoys a close collaboration with St Raphael's Church. Each class leads a class Mass or liturgy to share with teachers and parents. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have an opportunity to attend a class Mass weekly. The governors and senior leaders have appointed a group of pupils who will help with the planning and preparation of liturgy. Prayer is promoted at home with the introduction of the Wednesday Word which encourages prayer and discussion around the weekly gospel.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is very much at the heart of the school and influences and enhances the high quality of Catholic education offered as well as a rich experience of Catholic life and worship. 10% of curriculum time is devoted to teaching of religious education. Religious Education is well respected by pupils and parents and is central to the Catholic identity of the school. All classes have a prayer corner that is in keeping with the liturgical year. Displays around the school are of an exceptional standard. The leadership team and governors offer outstanding support and active guidance in developing and reviewing the place of religious education in the school.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are central to the daily life of the school. The pupil's liturgical formation is well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition: the celebration of the Eucharist and liturgical celebrations at Advent and Lent. 'Mary bags' and 'Rosary bags' are sent home with pupils during the months of May and October to encourage prayer and worship as a family. Wednesday Word letters are sent home to encourage discussion around the weekly gospel. The gospel is discussed at weekly gospel assemblies. Pupils are engaged in the planning of worship opportunities. There was a good use of visual resources to enhance collective worship. This was evident from Early Years up to Year 6 with pupils making the sign of the cross, closing eyes and praying reverently at the beginning of their RE lessons. All classrooms have prayer tables and displays linked to the liturgical season with current topic and key words displayed. Collective worship observed in Year 1 and Year 6 demonstrated prayer life central to the daily routine. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect and celebrate. The pupils know many traditional prayers and compose prayers for themselves. The collective worship observed was calm with a reflective atmosphere throughout. There are Masses at St Raphael's Church for several occasions, the beginning and end of terms, Holy Days of Obligation, leavers' Mass, Holy Communion Mass and St Raphael's day Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is made available for pupils at Key Stage 2. A team of pupils has been set up to plan and prepare liturgy, providing the focus of prayer to the community. Prayer, reflection and singing form a part of every act of worship. Pupils' spiritual development is enabled through the excellent opportunities they have for quiet, reflection, sharing and discussion.

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

is outstanding

The school has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing' and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents as individuals and as a community. Pupils achievements both inside and outside of school are regularly celebrated during

weekly celebration assemblies through the use of golden tickets and house points. Pupils are committed through their actions to supporting a wide range of activities at local, national and international stage. During Harvest, pupils gather food to donate to an Ealing food bank. Pupils in early years collected presents at Epiphany which were then donated to Caritas for a local mother and baby charity. During Lent, pupils collect money for a Lenten appeal charity. This year, pupils collected for the homeless shelter in Hillingdon and for WE charity by holding a sponsored silence. The school choir visited a local nursing home and Ealing hospice to sing to the elderly residents. The pupils understand they support charities and help donations and aid to charities in need. Not only do pupils actively engage in acts of service but they have an excellent knowledge of the theology underpinning their actions.

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

St Raphael's has forged very strong links with parents, the deanery and the diocese. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school; talking articulately about the school's Catholic ethos and the improvements that are being made. Parents strongly feel that the school is warm and welcoming; the staff are approachable and that there is open communication between home and school. Parents feel supported in all aspects of school life and say that the pastoral care is exceptional. The school is very involved in the Ealing deanery, sharing in moderation sessions as well as their own extensive professional development programme. The school has developed strong links with the local parish. The parish priest leads reconciliation sessions in Advent and Lent as well as class liturgies throughout the year. The school has developed close links with parish catechists and they have supported staff and pupils with their work for Caritas. The school sees itself as part of the diocese, actively engaging staff in training sessions and pupils in events.

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

is outstanding

The leadership and management are clearly outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school. No aspect of the daily life of the school is left unobserved in reflecting on the mission of Catholic education. Pupils have a clear sense of the school's distinctive understanding of itself as a Catholic school and how that helps them in the formation of their faith. The school's mission statement 'As we walk with Jesus, we love, live and learn' dynamically expresses the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, analytical and challenging. There are excellent systems in place to support the induction of new staff, to develop and enhance the contribution of all staff as well as those from other Christian traditions and other faiths to actively participate in, and contribute to the Catholic life of the school. The senior leadership team strive to ensure there are many creative and strategic developments to enhance learning such as the introduction of other faiths week, the use of Sieger Koder paintings and the inspirational eco gardens.

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

- In Years 1 to 6 prayer tables and RE display boards should be more of a central focal point in the classrooms.

Information about this school

- The school is a three form entry Catholic Primary school in the locality of Ealing.
- The school serves the parishes of St Raphael's, Yeading and St Bernard's Northolt.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 94%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 4% 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 93%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 10.
- There are 7% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 1.5% 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 below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 56 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (9%).

Department for Education Number	307 3508
Unique Reference Number	101925
Local Authority	Ealing

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	620
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mairead Cassidy
Headteacher	Ms Evelyn Ward
Telephone number	0208 8410848
Website	www.st-raphaels.ealing.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-raphaels.ealing.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 st February 2013
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Very 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 20 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 2 acts of worship.
- 4 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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Miss Robina Maher

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