

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School

Buckingham Road, Hackney, London N14JB



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 20 June 2018

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The religious education curriculum meets all the requirements of the Curriculum Directory in an exceptional manner; it challenges pupils to develop religious literacy in a rich, relevant and creative way.
- Religious education is delivered in an imaginative and engaging way by using an extensive range of ICT, art, music and drama to enhance learning. This is a key characteristic of the school; the creative way in which the religious education curriculum engages pupils.
- Excellent achievement is evident where pupils are challenged to think deeply and given opportunities to write at length about their faith.
- The focus on extended writing is a significant strength of the curriculum provision that enables pupils to excel in religious education.
- Pupils overwhelmingly have positive attitudes towards their religious education lessons, and this contributes to the rapid progress that they make. Pupils enjoy religious education.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and thus, behaviour for learning is exemplary.
- Teacher confidence in using scripture is very good and as a result pupils are able to use the Bible with ease.
- The religious education team focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, resulting in an outstanding experience for pupils.
- The school has a culture of high expectations of teachers, and this is clearly seen in regard to religious education.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- It is evident to all that religious education is a subject that is at the heart of the school and its influence enhances the education that pupils receive.
- A key feature of the school is its commitment to exemplary experiences of prayer and worship for pupils. The use of music to enhance acts of worship is especially noteworthy.
- Prayer in classrooms reflects the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship.
- The environment significantly aids the prayer life of the school.
- There are extensive opportunities for pupils to be of service to others.
- Respect is embedded in the school.
- Partnerships are very strong with parents, parish and diocese.
- The school motto, 'shine with love, kindness and respect', is embedded across the school; pupils, staff and governors all can state it and articulate its meaning.
- The headteacher is an outstanding innovator, whose commitment to continual improvement means that there is no room for complacency.
- The leadership team are passionate about promoting a school that is fully committed to the Church's mission in education.
- The leadership team and the staff are excellent witnesses to the values of the school; their impact can be seen in the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of pupils.
- The school is an oasis of calm.
- The governors of the school make a significant contribution to ensuring the school is an outstanding and thriving Catholic school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the last inspection there were two issues for action identified: to embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum, and the use of the new style of pupil targets to inform future lesson planning so that all pupils continue to achieve their full potential in religious literacy. Both these issues have been successfully met. Since the last inspection the RE curriculum is now fully embedded. The use of pupil targets is secure; pupils have a keen awareness of the next steps they need to take in their learning through strong teacher feedback in marking.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The religious education curriculum meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) in an exceptional manner; it challenges pupils to develop religious literacy in a rich, relevant and creative way. There is a systematic programme of study which comprehensively covers all the strands and requirements of the RECD. Each topic plan sets out the areas taught from Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ ensuring progression and depth of provision. RE is delivered in an imaginative and engaging way by using an extensive range of ICT, art, music and drama to enhance learning. This is a key characteristic of the school; the creative way in which the RE curriculum engages pupils. The school has a strong emphasis on the use of direct scripture in RE lessons. The result is that pupils can demonstrate greater refinement in making connections between scripture and their own everyday lives. The use of the 'Word on Wednesday', material that anticipates the following Sunday readings, has had a very good impact on supporting pupils' confidence in engaging with biblical texts. Music greatly enhances RE lessons in stimulating learning experiences for pupils. The very high quality RE displays across the school provide an excellent environment for pupils to develop their own learning. The teaching of other faiths (Judaism Islam and Buddhism), ensures a broad and balanced RE curriculum, which is enhanced by visits to relevant places of worship.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Achievement in RE is in line with that for other core subjects demonstrating above average attainment. Excellent achievement is evident where pupils are challenged to think deeply and given opportunities to write at length about their faith. The focus on extended writing is a significant strength of the curriculum provision that enables pupils to excel in RE. The school participates fully in both deanery and diocesan moderation of pupil work, and as a result the schools' internal moderation is highly accurate. Analysis of pupil progress is rigorous; this allows the school to ensure that all pupils are tracked efficiently so that intervention, where needed, is effective. As well as ensuring that less able students are supported to make excellent progress, also groups of more able pupils are given extra input which enables them to reach the highest levels of attainment. Evidence in pupil books demonstrates excellent progress and effective marking moves pupils on in their learning. Pupils overwhelmingly have positive attitudes towards their RE lessons, and this contributes to the rapid progress that they make. Pupils enjoy RE.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

The culture of rigorous monitoring and support ensures that teaching is outstanding over time. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and thus, behaviour for learning is exemplary. The provision for the range of abilities is outstanding; the teaching assistant support for RE is very strong. There is consistency across the year groups in terms of lesson planning and there are a range of structures for learning enabling all pupils to make rapid progress. Teacher confidence in using scripture is very good and as a result pupils are able to use the Bible with ease. Questioning is a significant strength with most teachers, and, at its best, teachers are able to foster higher order thinking that allows pupils to reflect on the deeper significance of religious belief and practice. As a starter to a lesson on reconciliation, the teacher washed a plate clean. This captured the imagination of pupils and was used to creatively explore the concept of forgiveness. In another lesson on the

same theme pupils demonstrated both verbally and in their written work how the material being examined related to their experience of the world. Teachers use a variety of well-judged teaching strategies to match to the learning needs of pupils.

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

The leadership of RE is organised in a distributed model; there is a team approach (five members of staff) to leading and managing RE which is both innovative and highly successful. The interesting approach to the leadership of RE enables a wide range of expertise and experience to contribute to the success of RE. The team, consisting of new and experienced teachers, have a dynamic and creative vision for RE that strives consistently for excellence. The school has a culture of high expectations of teachers, and this is clearly seen in regard to RE. There is excellent provision for continuing staff training and well-judged support is given to help teachers where needed. The team ensures participation in diocesan training and deanery moderation opportunities. The procedures for tracking progress and monitoring the effectiveness of teaching are excellent. The self-assessment document used in preparation for this inspection was thorough and accurate. The RE team focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, resulting in an outstanding experience for pupils.

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

- To further improve by using pupil RE peer leaders to support pupils of different abilities.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

In the previous diocesan inspection, the school was given the target to 'provide more opportunities for pupils to plan and present their own acts of worship'. This has been fully met. Pupils of all ages have planned and led a wide range of liturgies and services. The school places great emphasis on the age appropriate nature of worship and have ensured that these acts of worship all feature scripture, music, drama and dance.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The school is authentically fulfilling the Bishops' requirements for classroom religious education; curriculum time is above the 10% required. A key and distinctive feature of this school is in the timetabling; RE lessons are distributed evenly across the week. The leadership team are fully committed to the subject and the governors equally value the high status that RE has. The support that the religious education receives is outstanding in terms of resources and budget. Staff are extremely well supported in their professional development for the teaching of RE, especially in the time given to support those who are newly qualified. The headteacher is relentless in pursuing high standards and strives to impart his vision to not only the RE leadership team but to the entire school. The school is a beacon of outstanding practice in terms of the shared vision that the governing body, the leadership team and staff have for classroom religious education.

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

is outstanding

A key feature of the school is its commitment to exemplary experiences of prayer and worship for pupils. The use of music to enhance acts of worship is especially noteworthy as demonstrated by the assembly and hymn practice that were seen during the inspection. The cycle of the liturgical year is carefully planned and also tries to ensure that it links in with events in the wider world and the anniversary of saints. For example, the Corpus Christi procession provided pupils with an opportunity to experience reverence, and the Easter liturgy used Cafod's resources to challenge pupils. There is a well balanced programme of liturgies that ensure age appropriate prayer and worship but there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to experience Mass as a whole school and also in smaller groups such as in a class. The headteacher's weekly assembly on a Monday focuses on Gospel readings and the events of the week ahead. The system of class assembly is an example of outstanding practice that is worthy of promotion within the diocese. Each class has three assemblies a year, to which parents are invited to attend. After the assembly, all the parents are invited to go down to their child's class. There they meet the teachers and support staff and pupils share their work, including RE with their parents. This experience is highly valued by parents as demonstrated by the very high levels of attendance by parents. Prayer in classrooms reflects the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. As already noted, pupil engagement in the planning and preparation of worship is an integral part of the culture of the school; a remembrance liturgy to mark one year since the Grenfell Tower tragedy was prepared by pupils. There is excellent commitment to evaluating the opportunities offered and clear evidence of action taken to address areas for development. The environment of the school significantly aids the prayer life of the school. The high quality of displays, the wide range of flora around the school and in the prayer garden all contribute to a school in which prayer and worship are central.

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

is outstanding

There are extensive opportunities for pupils to be of service to others. Examples include class buddies to support younger children's safety and learning, the roles of head boys and girls and deputy head boys and girls, school and class councillors, litter monitors and sports ambassadors. As

well as service within the school, pupils also engage in supporting those in need outside the school, such as giving to the local food bank as well as engaging with the work and mission of Cafod. There are many opportunities for fundraising by pupils, staff and parents. Supporting such organisations allows the community to see the values of the Gospel put into practice. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand what they are doing and why they are doing it, and explaining how their contribution makes a difference. As a result, pupils are very secure about the theological rationale for Catholic schools to engage in corporal works of mercy. The pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds and their excellent behaviour and the quality of relationships with one another is a huge strength of the school. Respect is embedded in the school. Justice and peace issues are explored in the RE curriculum and the teaching of a unit of work on Inspirational People. Pupils also visit the Royal Courts of Justice and there is a debating society. The school ensures that pupils understand that call to justice and a sense of service are essential parts of their Catholic identity.

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

Partnerships are very strong with parents, parish and diocese. The parents' questionnaire revealed very high levels of support and trust in the school. Parents are regularly kept informed about the religious education curriculum and the 'Wednesday Word' is used very effectively within RE lessons and is a very useful support to families. Parents have high levels of involvement in the life of the school, they are invited to wide range of events, including concerts and liturgies. The school website and electronic communication all support the outstanding relationship the school has with parents. There are strong links with the parishes as many members of staff play active roles in the life of local church as catechists and safeguarding leads. Relationships with the diocese are strong. There are excellent links between staff and diocesan officers. Newly qualified members of staff attend introductory sessions at the diocese. The head is a lead diocesan inspector and serves on the Inspection Committee of the Education Commission. The school has a clear understanding that as a diocesan school they not only actively participate in the services provided by the diocese but that the school also puts itself at the service of the diocese.

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

is outstanding

The school's leadership team is fully committed to the Church's mission in a dynamic and consistent way. The school motto, 'shine with love, kindness and respect', is embedded across the school; pupils, staff and governors all can state it and articulate its meaning. The headteacher is an outstanding innovator, whose commitment to continuous improvement means that there is no room for complacency. He has high ambitions for the school and instils in staff and pupils the desire to strive for excellence. There is a culture of rigorous and honest analysis of all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. The self-evaluation form is a very accurate assessment of the strengths and areas for development; inspectors concurred with all the judgements the school made about itself. The leadership team are passionate about promoting a school that is fully committed to the Church's mission in education. All staff are excellent witnesses to the values of the school; their impact can be seen in the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of pupils. The school is an oasis of calm. Staff induction is thorough and involves school and diocesan support. The governors are regular visitors to the school and as a result are well informed and able to challenge the school to improve. The governing body is very experienced and this is shown in their commitment to ongoing training. They make a significant contribution to ensuring the school is an outstanding and thriving Catholic school.

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

- To further develop by exploring more opportunities for pupils to experience Mass

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Dalston, Hackney.
- The school serves the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph, Kingsland.
- 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 83%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is four.
- There are 24% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom three 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.
- 63 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (28%).

Department for Education Number	204 / 3371
Unique Reference Number	100264
Local Authority	Hackney

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	228
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Derek Vitali
Headteacher	Mr Sean Flood
Telephone number	0207 254 7353
Website	www.olsjschool.net
Email address	office@solsj.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2013
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Outstanding
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 nine 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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