

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Treadgold St, Notting Hill, London, W11 4BJ

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 28 June 2018



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- Despite a turbulent few years, the leadership team has worked relentlessly to ensure that religious education is at the heart of the curriculum.
- The content of religious education meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* and is becoming increasingly dynamic and engaging in the way it being delivered throughout the school.
- Teachers create a calm and purposeful environment and the children are engaged in their learning.
- The teachers use the newly embedded curriculum creatively to ensure children have a valid, contextual experience of scripture.
- Teaching is good, with aspects of outstanding practice throughout the school, especially in the more creative aspects of lessons.
- Good teaching throughout the school results in the children's developing progress over time.
- Assessment and tracking of children's progress is well established and rigorous.
- The governing body is supportive and ambitious for the school.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Children are not yet given enough opportunities to extend their learning independently.
- There is insufficient coverage of a range of other world religions.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The leadership of the executive head teacher, head of school and governing body in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Leaders, including governors, have committed passionately and with great faith to the Catholic life of the school, so ensuring an enriching Catholic way of life for all their pupils.
- 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 school has made exceptional progress in encouraging the children's understanding of the Common Good and they truly understand the call to human flourishing.
- Pupils are offered a rich and dynamic experience of Catholic life which permeates the whole community.
- The school's self-evaluation is robust, evaluative and accurate in highlighting its strengths and areas for development.
- A variety of initiatives and strategies shows a clear vision for school improvement.
- The outstanding partnership between parents, parish, deanery and diocese is testament to the support they have given one another in times of great suffering.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive and very appreciative of the school's impact on their children's faith journey.
- During a difficult journey for the school, leaders have been unwavering in their commitment not only to the pupils but also to the wider community.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

A recently established curriculum for religious education is now fully embedded and well-resourced. Staff have been given an exceptional amount of support to ensure that subject knowledge is strong and lessons are well taught. Evidence of a coherent thread running through all lessons and books ensure a good foundation for the children's knowledge and understanding in religious education (RE). Assessment systems are now robust and accurate in their evaluation of children's progress. The religious education lead has implemented a comprehensive plan to address the needs of all pupils and has supported staff in developing these. Moderation of pupils' work continues to develop well.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School's RE curriculum fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD)*. The new units of work are clearly becoming embedded and are a solid foundation on which to deepen the pupils' religious literacy. Staff have been supported exceptionally by leaders to develop their knowledge and understanding. The curriculum includes a study of Judaism in every year group and Islam on a 4-year cycle. The curriculum is not yet developed sufficiently to include other world religions at different key stages.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils achievement in religious is good and the school is committed to continue raising standards as can be seen from recent tracking data. There is a richness of RE displays and prayer tables which children use effectively in their learning. In a Year 3 class, one child was able to use the 'child-speak' attainment targets and strands on a class display to reinforce which strand the class was currently working on. In a meeting with the children, they were able to articulate their RE targets and say how they are supported in making progress. Teachers are developing their questioning skills to promote higher order thinking and this is something that the school is continuing to focus on. Progress can be seen in the content of children's written work throughout the year as well as between year groups. RE books contain a variety of activities although it is evident that some teachers are more confident in using different media for example, art and ICT than others. Regular monitoring of books ensures that work is consistently marked and feedback from the teacher is responded to by the children. In this way, any misconceptions are picked up quickly by teachers in books and lessons. Pupils are tracked closely within a highly effective tracking system and can articulate their targets in RE based on this system. Teachers are dedicated to ensuring pupils achieve well in RE. Pupils enjoy their lessons, they listen well and are eager to learn.

The quality of teaching is good

Teachers are making every effort to ensure that their knowledge of the RE curriculum continues to develop. Some very creative and inspirational lessons observed put scripture into real context for the children. For example, in a Reception lesson, the children were able to role play the story of the Good Samaritan effectively using a variety of props to retell the story in their own words, and in a Year 1 lesson, the class were given opportunities such as mending nets and salting fish to experience the role of a fisherman on Lake Galilee through the use of carousel activities. In a Year 6 class, two pupils confidently presented their research on St Francis of Assisi whilst their peers took notes to use for their own research. This was a good example of children working collaboratively using ICT. In the best lessons observed, there was a good sense of pace and lessons were not overly teacher directed. Differentiation was not obvious in most lessons or in books and this is an area that the leadership team have identified for development. Teachers have a good relationship with the

children and their behaviour management strategies are consistent throughout the school. The children are not yet exposed to enough independent type activities and discussions with less reliance on directed teaching.

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

Leaders have worked tirelessly to embed a new RE scheme of work and the support they have given staff is truly outstanding. They continually strive for excellence and have developed rigorous systems to monitor, track and ensure pupil progress in RE. There is sustained support for NQTs and new staff through a planned induction programme and the RE coordinator is able to deliver termly professional development and provide other support when necessary. They are exceptional in identifying those children who might not be making the required progress and support is put in place as necessary. Governors are kept informed of all developments and are pro-active in supporting work within RE. They work with the head to ensure religious education is at the heart of the school. They are very clear about the areas for development and are committed to improving the quality of RE. The generous RE budget, in line with other core areas, has been wisely used to support classroom resources and training for staff. The school takes part in deanery and diocesan moderation to make sure that they are assessing the pupils accurately.

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

- Enable children to become increasingly independent in lessons giving them opportunities to think about and reflect on their own reasoning and come to conclusions through independent peer and group discussion.
- Ensure children are challenged in their written outcomes in order to become increasingly well versed in their knowledge and understanding of religion.
- Review the teaching of other world religions so that children can have a wider experience of a range of world religions during their time in the school.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Child led worship is developing well, with a number of opportunities for pupils to engage in this. Children appreciate times of calm and reflection to pray. Systems are well established to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school. The school have identified a programme in which they can develop the vision and mission of the school. They are currently midway in this programme.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education permeates the school. From children's exemplary behaviour, to displays, to all relationships, the school is living out its mission and that of the Church in education. The school has placed a real emphasis on religious education in appointing the head of school as RE leader. Religious education receives its full allocation of 10% taught at each key stage. The generous budget is indicative of the value placed on RE as the core of the curriculum. Planning for the RE curriculum has been recently reviewed and staff are becoming increasingly confident in this respect. Staff take part in dedicated RE training with two days this academic year dedicated to improving teachers' subject knowledge on the units of work.

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

is outstanding

The experience of Catholic worship is embedded in the fabric of the school. The environment in and around the school offers a prayerful oasis for the whole community and especially so during the traumatic events of the last year. The school has responded to this in a faith filled and faith led way, from which the prayer life of the school has evolved, making it relevant and real for this community of faith. The school's 'Garden of Hope,' built in memory of the Grenfell Tower victims, offers the whole school community a sanctuary of quiet prayer and reflection. Children use the area respectfully and many were seen going in during break time to say a quiet prayer. In discussion with senior leaders, one commented that the Grenfell tragedy had resulted in a deepening of faith having walked the hard journey together, pupils, parents and staff. Children are given regular opportunities to celebrate Mass in the local parish and, during Advent, celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation and led the Stations of the Cross. Leaders spoke about how much the children's repertoire of hymns and liturgical music has developed and this was evident in both the Year 5 assembly and the Key Stage 1 hymn practice. Amongst the evidence provided to the inspectors was a letter which stated 'a recent demonstration of the pupils' growing maturity in understanding their faith was the incredible performance of a passion play based on John's Gospel – this was performed with great dignity and was genuinely deeply moving.' A new 'star of the week' for RE has been introduced and this has been well received by children and parents. The school makes the most of outdoor areas, for example the forest area and garden of hope, and uses them creatively for prayer and reflection. The recent Mass to mark the first anniversary of Grenfell was held outdoors in the forest area.

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

is outstanding

The school leaders are determined that their community is not defined by tragedy and are working exceptionally hard to ensure each child's faith journey is enriched with a commitment to action for social justice. The school works closely with a number of charities, for example, Support 4 Grenfell, bags of kindness for the homeless, NSPCC, letters to Uganda and The Passage. The children's actions linked to these charities are prominently displayed around the school and the children are

able to talk confidently about the activities in which they have been involved. In a meeting with a group of children, when asked why they raise awareness for charities, one child answered, 'because we are the hands of God.' Another child quoted from St Francis of Assisi, 'All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.' When asked what that meant, she said that although some people are suffering, there is always hope. The newly developed chaplaincy team spoke with enthusiasm about the direction they wanted to take, saying, 'We want to look after our school, make sure everyone is having a good time. We want to help people sort out their problems.' They feel that part of their mission is to make people feel welcome in their school. Each term the school focus on a line from the prayers of St Francis and this is seamlessly articulated throughout the school. A weekly assembly, led by the head of school, focuses on the Gospel of the week and children were able to speak about the messages they had remembered.

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

This partnership is a real strength of the school and continues to grow. Parents commented that the recently appointed head of school shows 'total dedication, personal commitment and time, she really loves the school.' The school has worked increasingly with parish and parents to build a shared understanding of community. In the school's own recent survey comments include 'I have seen a big change in what my children know about the Bible' and 'My child regularly comes home singing new hymns learnt at hymn practice, thank you'. The school has strong links with the Diocese of Westminster and avail themselves of professional development opportunities and moderation. Parents are welcomed into the school and appreciate the opportunities to see their children perform during class assemblies as well as being able to share in the curriculum with a variety of workshops. Newsletters and communication home regarding religious education and the Catholic life of the school are regular and parents are kept well informed. Links with the parish are strong. The inspectors were told 'the behaviour of the children has improved so much – they respond well to the responses and are keen to answer questions during the homily.' Children from the school are in the church choir and are altar servers.

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

is outstanding

The school leadership's dynamic and relentless approach to ensuring all pupils have an enriching Catholic experience is inspiring. Through turbulent times they have been steadfast and committed to driving the school forward, this enables all their pupils to experience the richness of a Catholic education and prepare them to embrace discipleship for life. Governors have worked tirelessly with the executive headteacher and leadership team and commented on the strength of her strategic vision combined with the head of school's intimate knowledge of the school community.

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

- Embed child led worship further by enabling children to take the lead more regularly.
- To celebrate the outstanding Catholic life of the school by developing the school website, thereby enabling the wider community to appreciate the excellent work undertaken.

Information about this school

- The school is a one and a half form entry Catholic voluntary aided school in the locality of Kensington and Chelsea.
- The school serves the parish of St Francis of Assisi, Notting Hill.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 83%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 15 % and from other faiths is 0.45%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 50%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 15 % 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 average.
- There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 86 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (36%).

Department for Education Number	207/3437
Unique Reference Number	100494
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	225
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Asgian
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Kathleen Williams
Head of School	Mrs Amie Kelleher
Telephone number	0207 7278523
Website	www.franassisi.rbkc.sch.uk
Email address	info@franassisi.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	January 2016
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Requires improvement
The Catholic life of the school	Requires improvement

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 8 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 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.

Mrs Monica McCarthy

Mrs Nancy Conoboy

Ms Catherine Bryan

Mrs Theresa O'Sullivan

Lead Inspector

Shadow Lead Inspector

Associate Inspector

Associate Inspector

Published by the Diocese of Westminster

This publication is available at: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005

E: education@rcdow.org.uk

W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>