

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

The Ridgeway NW7 1EJ

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 5 December 2018



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The school's strong Catholic identity permeates all aspects of learning
- The content of the curriculum fully meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Pupils achieve very well in religious education and standards of achievement are as good as, and in many cases better than, in other core subjects.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and well versed in religious literacy and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is of a high standard. They are warm, friendly and welcoming ambassadors for the school.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and expertise and these, coupled with high expectations ensure pupil progress is built on year on year.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning, classrooms are very well resourced and pupils are engaged and eager to do well.
- The school provides pupils with excellent opportunities to study other world faiths in a lively and dynamic way.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact supporting the learning of all pupils.
- The religious education coordinator supports colleagues exceptionally well and, along with other senior leaders, is passionate in making St Vincent's the best it can be.
- The governors are excellent in their support of the school and ensuring staff and pupils have all the support necessary to continue to strive for excellence.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- School leaders are fully committed to the Catholic education mission of the church.
- Vincentian values underpin every aspect of school life.
- The school's Mission Statement is actively lived by all members of the school community.
- St Vincent's fully meets the requirements for religious education to be given 10% curriculum time as laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Prayer and worship are central to life at the school and pupils are afforded many opportunities to pray throughout the school day.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in their determination to answer the call to serve others through a wide range of activities, planning and leading acts of worship and organising fundraising events. Pupils look beyond their own needs to the needs of the wider world.
- Respect for each other and the environment is firmly embedded in the school.
- Partnership with parents and the local parishes is very strong. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.
- The headteacher and her team ensure that the uniqueness of each individual is recognised and celebrated.
- Governors demonstrate a real commitment to the school, they know the school very well and are very supportive in helping leaders develop all aspects of Catholic life.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The practice of pupils responding to teacher comments is embedded in daily practice. The 'Agreed Levels of Understanding' are used in teacher planning to ensure that pupils are challenged throughout units of work and that planned activities match the level requirements. Training is provided to increase teachers' subject knowledge and phase planning ensures continuity and progression. Robust monitoring shows that teachers have a strong understanding of the agreed levels of understanding which is clearly reflected in the number of pupils achieving higher levels at the end of each key stage.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of the curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). There is a systematic programme of study which comprehensively covers all the strands of the RECD. In addition to a published scheme the school uses other resources effectively to enrich learning and develop further aspects of Catholic Social Teaching. The teaching of the Jewish, Islamic and Hindu faiths is built into the curriculum and is well delivered enabling pupils to extend and broaden their knowledge and understanding of other cultures. This work is further supported by visits to places of worship. During the inspection a group of pupils thoroughly enjoyed a visit to the Shri Swaminarayan Temple in Neasden and the school has developed strong links with a local Jewish school to afford pupils the opportunity to observe their celebrations. The religious education (RE) coordinator ensures that new staff receive high quality induction and support and all staff have the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching religious education.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Over the last three years pupils' achievement has continued to rise so that in Key Stage 1 27% of pupils achieved the highest level and in Key Stage 2 40% of pupils achieved level 5. In the Foundation Stage 40% of pupils were exceeding the progress statements on knowledge of religious stories and beliefs and how these beliefs are celebrated. Achievement in religious education is at least as good and in many cases is better in RE than in other core subjects. Teachers' planning ensures that skills are built upon and developed and progress is sustained year on year. The school uses internal cross-phase moderation as well as participating in regular deanery moderation meetings to ensure the accuracy of their judgements. The religious education coordinator attends diocesan moderation meetings and training events to further ensure the accuracy of school judgements. Pupils take great pride in their religious education books, further testimony to the respect and regard for which the subject is held. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and this has a positive effect on their progress. They are confident and articulate in their use of religious vocabulary, this is very evident during class discussions or when offering opinions.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teachers' strong subject knowledge and expertise are used to great effect in lessons. These ensure that pupils learn and achieve well, acquire knowledge, deepen their understanding and make sustained progress. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding in lessons. Whilst marking is regular and pupils' response to feedback is firmly embedded, the feedback offered does not always provide pupils with sufficient detail to fully challenge all pupils. Pupils' enjoyment of their religious education lessons is enhanced both inside and outside the classroom by a variety of teaching strategies including role play, video and song. The use of the Forest School area for religious education lessons creates a unique and special experience for the pupils. Excellent use is made of ICT to enhance and support religious education. In one lesson observed during the inspection pupils

were able to discuss the merits of a variety of Christmas Card designs. Pupils' comments were insightful and well developed. One pupil commented that he felt the card was Biblically incorrect after the class analysis of Luke's gospel account of the birth of Jesus. Pupils also made excellent use of i-pads to source the meanings of the different titles used for Jesus. Additional adults are well deployed to support and enhance learning opportunities for pupils. In one lesson a teaching assistant was using resources highly effectively to discuss the characters in Luke's gospel account of the birth of Jesus.

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

Senior leaders share a common passion to inspire and motivate the school community so that the school motto 'The love of Christ urges us, to care for each other and strive for excellence in everything we do' is central to the daily life of the school and the driving force for everything they do. Their vision to instil a love of the subject and a commitment to delivering and achieving the highest standards is testimony to their excellent leadership and management. The principle that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God is clearly demonstrated in the respect and tolerance shown in the relationships of all stakeholders. There is excellent support for all staff in the planning and teaching of religious education and all staff are offered the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching and participate in internal and deanery moderation processes. There is excellent provision for continuing professional development. Senior leaders and governors are fully committed to enabling staff to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and support them in the process. Governors are regular visitors to the school; they are well informed and know the school well.

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

- Continue to develop marking and feedback to ensure that it is fully developmental and provides pupils with detailed steps on how to move their learning forwards even further.
- Ensure that pupils are even more proactive in the target setting process.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The targets set in the previous inspection have been met. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in retreat days as well as the opportunity to visit Rome with the headteacher. Pupils have also visited local churches and retreat centres as well as visiting Westminster Cathedral as part of the Remembrance Day and Year of Mercy celebrations.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The headteacher and her staff are fully committed to the legacy and traditions as a Vincentian school ensuring that Catholic education is the bedrock of the school. St Vincent's fully meets the 10% of curriculum time as required by the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. The high regard for religious education is further reflected in the very generous budget allowance and the support offered to staff for their professional development and the high numbers of staff who have taken up this opportunity. Classroom and school displays ensure the status of religious education at the heart of the school. Every aspect of school life reflects their Catholic identity and mission; this was truly evident in the project based learning on water which pupils were preparing to share with the school community.

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

is outstanding

The school ensures that prayer and worship are central to life at the school and are woven into the fabric of school life. Pupils are involved in planning, preparing and leading class assemblies and actively engage in writing their own prayers as well as using the traditional prayers of the church. Each classroom has a prayer table which is dutifully monitored by pupils and to which pupils add their own prayers. Opportunities to celebrate Mass, special assemblies and the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent are plentiful. The timetabling of celebrations is carefully planned to allow as many parents as possible to join the school. The Mass to celebrate the feast of St Vincent is the first opportunity for the whole school community to come together and children new to the school receive the Miraculous Medal as a symbol of their belonging to the Vincentian family. The 'Travelling Nativity' during Advent provides an opportunity for pupils to share a liturgy at home with their families. The statue of Our Lady from the parish is brought to school during May and October to further enhance the prayer life for pupils. The introduction of the prayer garden to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the school provides a quiet retreat and place of reflection and tranquillity amid the busy school day. Pupils say that they appreciate and enjoy the opportunity to sit quietly and pray. Pupils are proud to serve their community as Mini Vinnies and as such are highly active in planning and leading a child centred liturgical life for their peers.

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

is outstanding

The staff and children share a common bond which 'is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus'. The Vincentian values are at the core of the school and penetrate everything they do, with pupils supporting those in need both in the school and the wider community. Pupils have a strong understanding of the need to support others and the theology behind this and they are working hard towards becoming a 'Rights Respecting School'. Displays around the school environment clearly demonstrate that pupils feel strongly about social justice, restorative justice and the need to be stewards of the environment. Pupils also feel a great responsibility for supporting both the local and

global community and work hard to raise funds for many charities including The Daughters of Charity projects in Kenya and Ethiopia, The Passage and Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. A recent fundraising event raised the fantastic sum of over £1070 for the disaster in Indonesia. The mini Vinnies have a strong understanding of the call to serve and are enthusiastic in devising different ways to raise money, they say 'we come up with ideas and make them happen' and that 'We should spread the news first at home. It may then spread around the world'.

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

The school has established strong links with parents who are overwhelmingly positive in their praise for the school. In a recent questionnaire parents comments included: 'Excellent school and staff' and that pupils receive an 'excellent Catholic education' and that 'our children are very happy going to school every day.' The school recognises parents as first educators of their children and encourages them to attend assemblies and eucharistic celebrations and work with the school to support their children on their faith journey. Links with the two parishes serving the school and the Daughters of Charity are very strong. Pupils have had the opportunity to visit the sisters where they have been guided through the artefacts in the sisters' heritage room. The sisters have also been involved in working with pupils during 'Godly Play' sessions. The parish priests visit the school regularly to celebrate Mass, lead the Stations of the Cross during Lent, hold reconciliation services, join the pupils in class for their religious education lessons and during October gather parents together at the school gates to say the Rosary. The school holds an outdoor parish Mass for the community during the summer term. Staff celebrate Mass with other schools in the deanery and have recently invited neighbouring schools to join them in training sessions for delivering religious education. The school interacts fully with the diocese, local authority and other Catholic schools. All staff regularly attend training and moderation opportunities with the diocese and maintain regular contact with diocesan advisors to improve their practice.

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

is outstanding.

Senior leaders and governors share a common vision for the school driven by faith and Vincentian values. The school mission statement, which is well known by all, is central to the whole community and underpins every aspect of school life. The headteacher ensures that St Vincent's is a warm, welcoming community recognising the uniqueness of each individual. Governors are highly proactive in their support of the school but are always ready to challenge the headteacher and her colleagues when necessary. They maintain a visible presence in the school, attending assemblies, celebrations and visiting classrooms. The behaviour of the pupils is of the highest standard and this reflects very well on the leadership and management shown by all the adults working in the school.

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

- Continue to work towards becoming a 'Rights Respecting School', keeping it in line with the Vincentian Values.

Information about this school

- The school is a one and a half form entry Catholic Voluntary Aided school in the locality of the borough of Barnet.
- The school serves the parishes of Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate, Mill Hill and St Anthony's, Edgware.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 97%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2.4% and from other faiths is 0.3%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 66.6%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 8.
- There are 22 % of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 4 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is above average.
- There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 24 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (7 %).

Department for Education Number	3023506
Unique Reference Number	101334
Local Authority	Borough of Barnet

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	323
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Michael Gradwell
Headteacher	Ms Marie Tuohy
Telephone number	020 8959 3417
Website	www.stvincentscatholicprimarymillhill.org.uk
Email address	office@stvincents.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2014
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 11 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 Angela Podmore	Lead Inspector
Mr James Stacey	Shadow Lead Inspector
Mrs Diana Roberts	Associate Inspector
Mrs Florence Collins	Associate Inspector

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