

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

Morpeth Terrace, London, SW1P 1EP

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 9 October 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The content of classroom religious education meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Pupils enjoy a well-resourced, systematic and creative programme of study which builds on prior learning.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education. Their progress is in line with that of other core subjects. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning; both aspects contribute significantly to their achievement. They make good use of the 'I can' statements for self-assessment.
- Teaching across all key stages is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils very well and create a highly positive learning climate for them. Pupils enjoy engaging and creative lessons which are well resourced to enhance their learning experiences.
- School leaders share a common vision and commitment to ensuring that both teachers and pupils are given all the support they need to be successful. Staff are very well supported to develop their confidence and expertise.
- Governors work closely with senior leaders to ensure that religious education is at the heart of the school.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils are not always given work which fully challenges their thinking which would enable them to become fully independent learners.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school's values and mission statement 'Love one another as I have loved you' permeate life at St Vincent de Paul. They are lived out in a very real way by the whole school community.
- Religious education is at the heart of this warm, welcoming, forward thinking school. It fully meets the 10% of curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Prayer and worship are woven into the daily life of all at the school. Pupils enjoy the unique privilege of being able to celebrate liturgies and acts of worship both in Westminster Cathedral and in school.
- Strong partnerships with parents, the Cathedral, the local Catholic community and the diocese contribute significantly to the Catholic life of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the school.
- Pupils have a deep commitment to the Common Good and serving others. They fully appreciate their responsibilities in supporting those in need. They enjoy sharing their gifts and talents for the benefit of others.
- The dedication of the headteacher, the religious education coordinator, senior leaders and governors ensure that the legacy of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul continues to drive the ethos and culture of the school.
- Governors are highly knowledgeable; they are proactive in their support of the school, sharing in the strategic leadership with energy and enthusiasm.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

All action points from the previous inspection have been met. Marking and feedback in religious education (RE) is in line with the school's policy and assessment is regular and recorded in line with that of other core subjects. Moderation of pupils' work takes place with other schools and staff attend diocesan moderation training. Pupils are provided with opportunities to learn about other world faiths which are supported by visits to other places of worship.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of classroom religious education fully meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Religious education is pivotal to life at St Vincent de Paul and leaders ensure that pupils experience a systematic programme of study which is well resourced, creative and engaging. In addition to a published scheme, the school makes use of a variety of other resources to enrich and develop pupils' learning experiences. Pupils have the opportunity to study other world faiths throughout their time in the school and visits to a local synagogue and mosque are built into the curriculum.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is good and is in line with their achievement in other core subjects. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and are now ready to be challenged even further and become fully independent learners. Accurate self-assessment contributes well to pupils knowing how well they are doing and what they need to do to continue to improve. They make good use of the 'I can' statements and opportunities to reflect on their work. Pupils take great pride in their work and ensure work in their books is beautifully presented, testimony to the respect they have for religious education. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate good levels of religious literacy both in their writing and during discussions. During the inspection pupils in Key Stage 1 were introduced to new religious vocabulary in a subtle and creative way when learning about the story of Moses. Pupils speak passionately about their faith journey using appropriate religious vocabulary to support their statements.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching is never less than good and in some cases is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and know them very well. They create a positive climate for learning where pupils can build on prior learning, enjoy their learning and consequently make good progress and achieve well. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and take full advantage of the support offered by colleagues, particularly the headteacher and religious education coordinator, as well as that offered by the diocese, to continually develop their practice and expertise. Relationships are highly positive and built on mutual respect and pupils engage fully with the learning opportunities offered to them. Teachers use resources in a creative and effective way to enhance pupils' learning experiences. In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils used Lego and dough enthusiastically to make their own Menorah when learning about the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, whilst the older pupils were able to experience and discuss the components which make up the Seder plate used during the Jewish festival of Passover. Robust, rigorous tracking and monitoring systems are firmly embedded and these allow teachers to evaluate pupil progress accurately. Regular training and moderation with other schools and the diocese ensure the accuracy of teacher judgements.

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

School leaders share a common vision and commitment to ensuring that religious education is at the heart of this warm, caring school. Robust systems are in place to track and monitor pupil progress in religious education to ensure that it is in line with that in other core subjects. Systems are firmly established to moderate and assess pupils' work and partnerships with other schools have been developed to ensure that these assessments are accurate. Good support is provided for newly qualified and recently appointed staff in order for them to maximise their impact when teaching religious education. The newly appointed religious education coordinator for RE is very well supported by the headteacher and governors. Self-evaluation is accurate and thorough, the school knows itself very well and sets targets which will continue to improve the quality of the religious education enjoyed by its pupils. Experienced and fully committed governors are regular visitors to the school, they work closely with school leaders to ensure that religious education continues to drive the school; they enjoy 'a trusting yet challenging relationship' with the school community. Provision for continuing professional development is good and school leaders and governors are committed to enabling staff to obtain the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies whilst staff who are not Catholic attend the diocese's Foundation Stones programme.

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

- Further develop the role of the newly appointed religious education coordinator to ensure high standards are maintained in the classroom.
- Ensure that all pupils are given opportunities which challenge their thinking and provide them with opportunities to develop independent learning skills in order that they can obtain the highest standards.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

All the action points from the previous inspection have been met. Staff have been able to participate in a retreat at the Cathedral and pupils have also enjoyed retreats at the Cathedral led by the school chaplain as well as class retreats for Quarant'ore as part of the Adoremus project. Four members of staff now hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Education and two members of staff are participating in the diocesan Foundation Stones programme.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is central to the life of the school and receives its full entitlement of 10% curriculum time as directed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It is well resourced and the generous funding allocation ensures that it is given the same importance as other core subjects. The status of religious education is further evidenced by the beautiful chapel and vibrant, high quality displays around the school and in the classroom areas. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about religious education commenting that the school provides a 'wonderful and comprehensive Catholic education' as well as demonstrating a 'very distinctive Catholic ethos'. The school's mission statement of 'Love one another as I have loved you' is known and practised by all in the school community as they go about their daily lives. School leaders and governors offer very effective support to staff so that they are able to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are woven into the fabric of life at St Vincent de Paul. The sacramental life of the pupils is nurtured through its unique partnership with Westminster Cathedral. Pupils welcome the opportunity to celebrate their annual Nativity and Passion plays in the Cathedral as well as participating in Mass to celebrate Holy Days of Obligation. Pupils are further offered the opportunity to celebrate the May Day procession, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Holocaust Memorial Day, Stations of the Cross and recitation of the Rosary in school. Special acts of worship linked to the charism of the school, such as the Conferral of the Miraculous Medal, are also celebrated annually. The Wednesday Word forms an integral part of the week for pupils, this even continues during school holidays; this in turn forms the focus for class-based worship. The school chaplain further supports this by visiting each class to present the Gospel. Prayer holds a very special place in the school and pupils enjoy participating in the traditional prayers of the Church as well as creating their own. In Key Stage 1, each class has a 'Prayer Bear', children take it home with them to participate in their family prayers. Key Stage 2 pupils have class prayer books which are also taken home for them to write a special prayer, pupils enjoy sharing these with their peers which are then displayed in the classroom prayer areas for all to enjoy. The newly formed 'Mini Vinnies' group report that they are looking forward to playing leading roles in planning and leading acts of worship for their peers and acting as positive role models who set a good example for the rest of the school.

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

is outstanding

Pupils are rightly proud of their commitment to serving others. They live out the school mission statement and the school values of achievement, aspiration, generosity, positivity, respect and responsibility. They understand the need to work together and be sensitive and supportive of each other. The school fosters and encourages its pupils to develop their understanding of others' faiths

and pupils are exceptionally respectful and supportive of each other's cultural backgrounds. Pupils speak passionately about their efforts to raise funds for local, national and international charities. During the inspection, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their impressive harvest collection for The Passage Day Centre, a local charity project for the homeless. Speaking about the local Trinity House hospice they reported that people 'need to spend their last days in a nice place and we can help them do that' adding we 'can all help change lives.' Pupils clearly recognise the need for human dignity in an age appropriate manner. They have a clear understanding of why they take part in charity work saying 'It is what Jesus would want us to do' and 'we try to follow in Jesus' footsteps and be like him.' Opportunities to recognise and celebrate achievements and talents are plentiful with pupils receiving badges and house points and ensuring that every pupil is known and valued.

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 partnership with parents is very strong as is clearly evidenced in the overwhelmingly positive responses in a recent parental questionnaire. Parents are welcomed into school throughout the year to join their children in celebratory events, liturgies, and class assemblies. They report that 'The school is an extension of our family home in terms of values and emphasis on kindness and faith.' The Wednesday Word is sent home so that parents can share the Gospel with their children. The school enjoys a unique relationship with the Cathedral. Two of the Cathedral priests are regular visitors to the school, one serving on the governing body and the other serving as school chaplain. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 write monthly articles for the cathedral 'Oremus' magazine. These articles are extremely well written and thought provoking. Pupils enjoyed joining their diocesan peers in the Cathedral for Mass to celebrate the end of the Adoremus project. The school community participates fully in diocesan training events and conferences. The headteacher has addressed colleagues aspiring to headship in Catholic schools and takes part in the headteachers' conferences.

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

is outstanding

The headteacher, staff and governors are all fully committed to preserving and promoting the school's rich heritage. The deeply rooted ethos of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul is at the heart of this vibrant, engaging Catholic community. The school is outward-looking and forward thinking, always striving to develop and refine its practice to secure the best outcomes for its pupils. The headteacher, staff and governors are excellent witnesses to the values and ethos of the school and this is reflected in the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Governors are highly knowledgeable; they are proactive in their support of the school sharing in the strategic leadership with energy and enthusiasm. They maintain a visible presence around the school and know the school very well.

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

- Develop the role of the newly established 'Mini Vinnies' so that they take a leading role in planning, leading and delivering liturgies acts of worship for their peers.

Information about this school

- The school is a one form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Westminster.
- The school serves the parishes of Westminster Cathedral and Holy Apostles, Pimlico.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 94%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 3% and from other faiths is 2%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 73%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 4.
- There are 45 (21%) of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 3 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 below average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 36 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (19%).

Department for Education Number	2133611
Unique Reference Number	101144
Local Authority	Westminster

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	215
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Moruzzi
Headteacher	Mr Nathaniel Scott-Cree
Telephone number	020 7641 5990
Website	www.svpcatholicprimary.org
Email address	office@svpschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 December 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	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 8 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 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 Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Angela Podmore

Lead Inspector

Mrs Katie Buckley

Associate Inspector

Ms Angela Dodd

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and 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>