

# St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School

Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London E9 9JY

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 20 November 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 programmes of study which are well resourced, systematic and creative. They build on prior learning to enable pupils to develop knowledge, understanding and skills as they progress through the school.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in religious education in line with, and often exceeding, that in other core subjects. Their positive attitudes to learning and excellent behaviour play a significant role in their achievement.
- Teaching across all key stages is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Additional adults play a significant role in supporting pupils to do their best. Relationships are highly positive, built on mutual respect, and pupils engage fully with their learning.
- School leaders, including governors, share and communicate a common vision and a clarity of purpose in ensuring that religious education is afforded a high profile and is at the heart of this warm and caring school. The religious education coordinator ensures that effective systems are in place to track and monitor teaching and learning and ensure pupils achieve well.

### Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils do not always respond to next steps marking in sufficient detail to move their work on significantly.

### B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- Religious education is at the heart of this warm, welcoming school. It fully meets the 10% of curriculum time as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- The school values and mission statement are fully evident in the daily lives of all in the school community. Beautiful displays in classrooms and around the school confirm the centrality of religious education in the life of the school.
- Pupils experience a variety of worship and prayer. Traditional prayer opportunities are well planned for and prayers written in pupils' home languages are testimony to the inclusive nature of the school and the respect shown to other cultures and traditions.
- Strong relationships with parents, the local community and the Diocese of Westminster contribute significantly to the Catholic life of the school. Parental questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the school.
- Respect for and value of each individual are at the heart of St Elizabeth. Pupils appreciate their responsibilities to serve others and support those in need. Pupils are actively encouraged to give of their time to support others, both within their community and in wider global community. They enjoy sharing and celebrating their gifts and talents for the benefit of others.
- School leaders and governors are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. They ensure that all staff are fully supported to enable them to have a deeper understanding of how they can contribute to the Catholic life of the school.

## A. Classroom Religious Education

### What has improved since the last inspection?

Areas for the development from the last inspection have been met. Pupils' achievement in religious education is in line with, and in many cases better than, that in other core subjects. Regular monitoring of teaching is embedded and teachers have the opportunity to observe colleagues and share best practice. Staff consistently have high expectations of their pupils. Next steps marking is in place.

### The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of classroom religious education fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Pupils have access to well-planned and well-resourced programmes of study which are delivered in a creative and engaging way to enhance their learning experiences. In addition to a published scheme of work, a variety of other resources are used to ensure pupils make good progress throughout the school, develop their knowledge and understanding and enjoy their lessons. Pupils have the opportunity to study other world faiths throughout their time in school and visits to a local synagogue and other places of worship are built into the curriculum. The school makes good use of guest speakers, parents and staff to further enhance learning opportunities for the children.

### Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils achieve well in religious education. Their achievement is in line with and in many cases exceeds that in other core subjects. Careful and robust monitoring ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress and that no group underachieves. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well. They take great pride in their work. Their books are well presented and the work in whole class religious education books is also beautifully presented, showing the high respect they have for the subject. Pupils' religious literacy is developing well and they are beginning to use religious vocabulary with increasing confidence. During the inspection pupils were introduced to key vocabulary at the start of their lesson and encouraged to use it in both their written work and in oral discussions. This was particularly strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage when pupils were learning about the baptism of Jesus by John and in Year 4 when looking at the genealogy of Jesus.

### The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching across the school is never less than good with some examples of outstanding practice. It is clearly evident that teachers plan a wide variety of activities collaboratively to create a positive climate for learning which caters for all learning styles and abilities. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and plan lessons, which build on prior learning to continually develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school ensures that their assessment of pupils' work is accurate by moderating work with colleagues in school and at local cluster group meetings as well as at diocesan moderation days. Teaching assistants are a strength of the school. Relevant training and involvement in planning and preparing lessons means they are deployed well to support and guide pupils' learning. Relationships are highly positive and built on mutual respect and pupils engage fully with their learning. A variety of learning opportunities for example, role play, art, poetry and a good selection of resources enhance pupils' enjoyment of religious education. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils thoroughly enjoyed using the Godly Play figures to demonstrate their understanding of the story of Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan. Pupils in Year 4 were similarly engrossed in writing raps when learning

about the genealogy of Jesus whilst pupils in Year 6 enjoyed creating role plays demonstrating their understanding of the story of Abraham and Isaac.

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

School leaders all share and communicate a common vision and a clarity of purpose in ensuring that religious education is afforded a high profile and is at the heart of this warm and caring school. All staff share a focus on improving the teaching and learning experiences for the children in their care. Robust systems are in place to track and monitor pupil progress and ensure that all groups of pupils make progress regardless of their starting points. Progress in religious education is now a part of the regular monitoring programme along with English and mathematics. Strong support is offered to newly appointed and staff who are not Catholic to develop their confidence when teaching religious education. Leaders are proactive in supporting and encouraging staff to extend their professional development resulting in a number of staff undertaking the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies and Foundation Stones programmes run by the Diocese of Westminster. The enthusiasm of the religious education coordinator is infectious in promoting the status of religious education and providing a positive role model. Governors bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the school. They enjoy a trusting yet challenging relationship within the school community.

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

- Ensure professional development is consistently targeted at supporting teachers in providing opportunities for children to broaden their religious literacy.
- To ensure that pupils are given sufficient time to respond to next steps marking in detail, so that it moves learning forward and so contributes significantly to their knowledge and understanding.

## B. The Catholic life of the school

### What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the previous inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 are actively involved in planning, preparing and leading class acts of worship for their peers. The School Parliament, together with the religious education coordinator, have been instrumental in further promoting the well-being of pupils. To this end a 'friend bench' in the playground has been added and the local MP has been invited into school to discuss local issues. Parents are kept well informed of what is being taught in religious education by means of curriculum maps which are sent home. Homework grids are also sent home which allow pupils to complete activities with their family.

### The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding

Religious education is central to life at St Elizabeth and receives its full entitlement of 10% of curriculum time as directed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Religious education is very well resourced and the generous budget allocation is further testimony of the importance placed on the subject. Beautiful classroom environments further demonstrate the status of religious education whilst around the school vibrant displays inspire and enhance the Catholic faith and traditions. The detailed and colourful displays describing class saints are particularly inspiring and show the enthusiasm and commitment pupils put into their research. Remembrance Day displays with personal reflections from the children are a moving reminder of the dedication of generations of soldiers. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and they endeavour to live out the school mission statement 'We are striving for excellence in a caring Catholic community' and the '4Rs' of Relationships, Resilience, Responsibility and Respect are at the forefront of everyday life in the school.

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

Pupils benefit from engaging with and participating in a variety of acts of worship, liturgies and prayer which are woven into the daily life of the school. Pupils have the opportunity to prepare, plan and lead acts of worship for their peers. They enjoy the opportunity to celebrate Mass at regular intervals throughout the year as a whole school community for Holy Days of Obligation and feast days, both in school and in the local parish church. They also enjoy celebrating the Eucharist as a class or year group. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered for the whole school community during Lent. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. Pupils enjoy a rich prayer life. As well as the traditional prayers of the Church, they enjoy writing their own prayers for their class prayer books and sharing these with their peers. Often these prayers are written in their home languages and the beautiful display of prayers in community languages is a powerful demonstration of the inclusive nature of the school. Calm, inviting and serene areas for prayer around the school environment afford pupils the space and opportunity for reflection and meditation amidst the busy school day as well as helping to develop pupils' spiritual and moral development. Classroom prayer focus areas are well maintained to reflect the liturgical year. Pupils appreciate that within their school some children are from other faith traditions, respecting their beliefs and cultures and how they contribute to the richness and ethos of St Elizabeth.

**The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –****is good**

Respect for and value of each individual are at the heart of St Elizabeth. Pupils delight in sharing and celebrating the gifts and talents of each other. These are celebrated during weekly assemblies where children receive the 'Headteachers Award'. Pupils are actively encouraged to give of their time to support others both within their community as well as the wider global community. Pupils support the wider community including the Bow Food Bank, Children in Need and Macmillan Cancer nurses through fund raising events. Older pupils have a good understanding of the theology behind their fund raising activities. A Year 6 pupil reported that 'In the book of Genesis God gave the world to us and we need to look after the world.' He added further that 'Jesus said we must love one another. God gave us the responsibility to care for each other.' Older pupils were able to talk about the importance of taking care of the world and the projects they had undertaken towards this aim including walking to school rather than using the car and planting trees. They were able to link this to Pope Francis' *Laudate Si* letter.

**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 developed very strong relationships with its parents who are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the school. They are welcome visitors to assemblies and Masses and actively engage in supporting school events. The 'Family Passport' is an excellent and exciting initiative to involve the whole family in school events. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the activities in which families need to engage to gain their passport stamps and proudly pointed out the display showing those families who have completed all five activities. The school enjoys excellent relationships with their local parishes and the parish priest visits the school weekly to celebrate liturgies, visit classes and chat with the pupils. He takes an active interest in getting to know the pupils and supporting them in developing their faith. A very strong partnership with the diocese ensures that all staff take full advantage of all the opportunities offered by the Education Service.

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

All leaders are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher, religious education coordinator and governors are excellent witnesses to the values and ethos of the school and this can be clearly seen in the positive attitudes and excellent behaviour of the pupils. Leaders act as moral compasses to both the '4Rs' and the school Mission Statement. Highly effective systems are in place to support staff from other faiths so that they can enjoy and contribute to the rich Catholic life of the school. Governors are proactive in supporting and guiding the school. They are regular visitors and know the school very well.

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

- Develop the role of pupil leadership within the school.
- Continue to develop pupils' understanding of human flourishing: to see that the poor and disadvantaged are of primary concern, so that they too can live their lives to the full.

## Information about this school

- The school is a two-form entry Catholic school in the locality of Bethnal Green.
- The school serves the parishes of St John the Baptist, Hackney and Our Lady of the Assumption, Bethnal Green.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 70.7%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 15% and from other faiths is 14%. 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 3.
- There are 15% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 8 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 above average.
- There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 31% of pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

<b>Department for Education Number</b>	211-2003
<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	I33288
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tower Hamlets

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	385
<b>The appropriate authority</b>	The Governing Body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Sullivan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Angelina John
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8980 3964
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-elizabeth.uk">www.st-elizabeth.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@st-elizabeth.uk">head@st-elizabeth.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	March 2015
<b>Grades from previous inspection:</b>	
<b>Classroom religious education</b>	Good
<b>The Catholic life of the school</b>	Good

## 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 10 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 6 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 Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Angela Podmore

Lead Inspector

Mrs Dee Abbot

Associate Inspector

Ms Deirdre Finan

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](mailto:education@rcdow.org.uk)  
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>