

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ

1-39 Drummond Crescent, London, NW1 1LY

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 20-21 November 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The content of curriculum religious education meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Religious education programmes are used to supplement and enhance the delivery of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory resulting in a progressive and cohesive programme.
- Most pupils make good progress in their knowledge of the Catholic faith and their religious literacy is very well developed for their age and ability.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning in their lessons and pupils are interested, engaged and eager to do well.
- The head of religious education has high expectations and the impact can be seen in the improving outcomes at GCSE.
- The leadership and management of religious education are good and there is a very clear vision and commitment to the school's key mission of the Church. The headteacher, leadership team and head of department have established essential systems and structures to ensure quality religious education. The school's self – evaluation is accurate and provides an excellent picture of the strengths and areas for development.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Teaching does not yet fully actively engage pupils in their learning and could be more creative.
- Differentiation is not fully embedded in all lessons allowing higher ability pupils to take a more active role.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The values of the leadership of the whole school are firmly rooted in the ethos of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) which permeates the whole community.
- The school meets the Bishops' Conference requirements for pupils to receive the weekly entitlement of 10% curriculum time in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 5% at Key Stage 5.
- There is a calm atmosphere in the school and many opportunities for spiritual growth. Pupils pray in their form groups and there is a weekly prayer theme, resources for which are prepared by the school and made available to all FCJ schools. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in the liturgical life of the school.
- The school has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to 'human flourishing' and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents as individuals and as a community. The Church's call to action for justice and peace is fully appreciated and the commitment to social justice and Common Good is well understood.
- The school has effective relationships with local parishes, parents and the community. The school has very strong links with other FCJ schools.
- Leadership of the school is outstanding; governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic dimension of the school. There are excellent systems in place to support the induction of new staff and to develop and enhance the contribution of all staff as well as those from other Christian traditions and other faiths to participate in and contribute to the Catholic life of the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the department has experienced several changes in relation to its staffing and curriculum. The department has worked on securing improvements to improve the consistency of diagnostic feedback across the department, particularly with the use of the green pen policy. All religious education (RE) staff have attended relevant assessment professional development and have undertaken regular assessment moderation internally to ensure a consistent approach.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of classroom religious education meets all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). All teaching staff know and understand the broad areas of the RECD and resources are used to facilitate good links to this. The schemes of work have been carefully planned to ensure that topics are revisited to allow pupils to study all four areas of the RECD in greater depth as they progress throughout the key stages. The RE curriculum allows numerous opportunities for pupils to develop religious literacy. During the inspection, several engaging activities developed curriculum content. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on the Passover, pupils had to write a diary entry of their imagined experience which they shared with their peers; this successfully consolidated their learning. Teaching is monitored regularly over time and good systems are in place to support teachers. Homework contributes well to pupils' learning which impacts upon progress. The link governor for religious education is actively involved in the support of religious education, is familiar with current developments and contributes positively to the subject's growth in the school.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

The RE department's GCSE results have improved from 2018 and 30% of pupils achieved a grade 9-7 which was a 11% increase from the previous year and one of the highest performing departments in the school to secure high grades. Pupils were in line with national averages. A level results are consistently good although they are small cohorts. The school is looking to increase numbers in A level Religious Studies. Pupil achievement is good when measured against appropriate benchmarks, levels of attainment, the school's own internal systems, deanery and diocesan moderation and thus indicates good progress. Pupils know and understand what they have to do to improve their work and show a good understanding of the levels of attainment. Pupils are confident users of religious vocabulary and illustrate very good knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability, applying a wide variety of skills to great effect in their work.

The quality of teaching is good

The school judged this area to be good and the inspectors concurred with this judgement. Teachers create a positive climate for learning in their lessons and pupils are interested, engaged and eager to do well. Teachers plan and teach lessons that deepen religious literacy. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils were using technical language such 'omniscience' and 'omnipotent' which pupils understood and could explain. In a Year 10 lesson on prayer, there was extremely good religious literacy and high quality questioning. This enabled the pupils to make good progress in the lesson. The feedback supplied facilitates the pupils making the next steps in their learning. Teachers have solid subject knowledge and create a positive climate for learning. Pupils are provided with clear feedback. This was evidenced in books with the use of what went well and even better if. The green pen policy is enabling a learning dialogue to take place between pupil and teacher. Pupils receive written feedback in their books in line with school policy and written feedback is given after half-

termly assessments. All staff know, understand and use information identifying pupils' current levels, targets and steps for further improvement. Homework is being set which is contributing to the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Homework and marking is monitored regularly by the head of department and supported by members of the leadership team through regular book checks and learning walks. Most classes visited had high expectations and pupils are engaged and most of them enjoy RE.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education

is good

The leadership and management of religious education are good and there is a very clear vision and commitment to the school's key mission of the Church. The head of department works tirelessly to ensure the religious education curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Subject knowledge is continually developed through ongoing professional development and staff are well supported in this. The department has an 'open door' policy encouraging all members to share good practice. The shared focus on improving teaching and learning ensures staff engage in shared observations and the subject is well planned with meetings and opportunities for the sharing of ideas. The head of RE has high expectations, and the impact can be seen in the improving outcomes at GCSE. The head teacher, leadership team and governors provide support to the department and have established essential systems and structures to ensure quality religious education. Self-evaluation is accurate and there are clear and rigorous strategies for addressing areas for improvement already in operation. Leadership is creative and dynamic in its enabling of pupils and staff to experience a richness of opportunities of a Catholic way of living.

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

- Make teaching more creative and actively engage pupils in their learning.
- Ensure that pupils respond to teacher feedback to ensure that progress is made.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

There has been considerable work on instilling in the pupils their duty to serve and help others. At the start of each year all pupils have an assembly on the theme of 'Service', giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on how they can support the community and encourage the idea of the Common Good. Pupils are now more willing to take ownership of their acts of service and charity and also have a better understanding of the theology underpinning their actions.

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

The school meets the Bishops' Conference requirements for pupils to receive the weekly entitlement of 10% curriculum time in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 5% in Key Stage 5. The content of the religious education curriculum meets all the requirements of the RECD. The delivery of the content of religious education is structured to ensure progression and development of content at a deeper level as pupils' progress through the key stages. A good range of resources are used to enhance the delivery of religious education. The RE department consists of five members of staff and have three dedicated classrooms in the school. The chapel is an oasis of calm and there is an opportunity for it to be the heart of the school within the new school building. The leadership of religious education is extremely well supported as are staff in their professional development for the teaching of religious education. The governors offer outstanding support and active guidance in developing and reviewing the place of religious education in the school.

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

The school meets its commitment to ensuring prayer and worship are a daily part of pupils' experience at school. The academic year starts with a welcome liturgy for Year 7 pupils, followed by a retreat to Aylesford Priory. Other year groups all celebrate Mass at St Aloysius Church in form classes throughout the year. Pupils pray in their form groups; there is a weekly prayer theme and reflection which is prepared by the school and then uploaded so it can be accessed by all the other FCJ schools. Pupils are encouraged to lead assemblies and there are many opportunities to develop their participation in the liturgical life of the school. The newly appointed chaplain has been very effective in organising the school's rich retreat programme which occurs both off site and in school. The retreats reflect on themes including 'Community and Christ in my life' and pupils are able to explore the life of Christ with the FCJ sisters and what it means to be a 'Faithful Companion of Jesus'. The pupils enjoy their retreats and viewed them as a very positive learning experience. There is an active Sixth Form leadership team who help lead spiritual life events throughout the year, including Remembrance Day, Holy Days of Obligation and assemblies. They also promote events such as the senior citizens' Christmas party and Cafod days. A staff chaplaincy team is being developed with the intention of looking at how the school community can develop and grow and be accessible to every member of the community and the school are developing a pupil chaplaincy team to take a lead in organising liturgical events.

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

The Church's call to action for justice and peace is prevalent in the school with many fundraising initiatives taking place throughout the academic year. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in local need. There are regular donations to Euston food bank and a whole school sponsored walk and Christmas card appeal supporting the Passage. Sixth form pupils run a 'Smiles' project where

they organise and support the local homeless. The school has also raised funding for the Catholic Children's Society and an African project. Not only do pupils actively engage in acts of service but they have an excellent understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. One pupil commented 'We enjoy being part of a community and helping others as this strengthens our faith'. Another pupil commented that 'Our school is like a family, the family has merged and become bigger'; and another, 'The school supports us emotionally as well as spiritually. There is a real sense of togetherness' The school works closely with parents and carers to develop a shared understanding with them of the mission of the school.

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 an ever growing relationship with local parishes, parents and community. The school has very strong links with the Faithful Companion of Jesus sisters who serve on their governing body and there are links with other FCJ schools in the country. The school also has strong links with its feeder primary schools. The head of Year 7 and members of the leadership team visit the primary schools and their Year 6 pupils as part of the transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The school maintains communication links with local parishes and pupils regularly attend Mass in the local parish of St Aloysius. Parents are encouraged to attend school events such as liturgies, Masses and the annual carol service via the website and the school newsletter. The parents' newsletter covers the spiritual life and has articles written by pupils about events taking place in the community. One parent commented that 'The school cares a great deal about emotional and spiritual growth of its pupils'. The school works well with the diocese and there is engagement with the services offered by the Westminster Education Service. The school participates in diocesan events such as the Good Samaritan Mass and Cafod fast days. There is on-going cooperation with other Catholic schools in the diocese and the local authority.

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

is outstanding

The leadership and management are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The governors make a highly significant contribution to the work and the Catholic dimension of the school. Pupils have a clear sense of the school's distinctive understanding of itself as a Catholic school and how that helps them in the formation of their faith. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, analytical and challenging. There are excellent systems in place to support the induction of new staff, to develop and enhance the contribution of all staff as well as those from other Christian traditions and other faiths to actively participate in and contribute to the Catholic life of the school. There is a whole school inset day on reflecting on teaching in a Catholic school and provides an opportunity for staff as well as those from other Christian traditions and other faiths to reflect on the Catholic identity of a school. The school has clear systems in place for receiving the views of parents, staff and pupils.

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

- To further develop and support the new chaplain, particularly with the pupil chaplaincy team
- To ensure that the new building has a visual presence of its Catholic identity.

Information about this school

- The school is a 5 form entry Catholic voluntary aided school in the locality of Somers Town
- The school serves St Aloysius, Somers Town and a further 40 parishes.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 39%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 23% and from other faiths is 25%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 24%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 8.9% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 27 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.
- 370 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (48.7%).

Department for Education Number	202 4652
Unique Reference Number	100055
Local Authority	Camden

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	760
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Modesto Tondelli
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Gill
Telephone number	020 3960 8000
Website	www.mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk
Email address	admin@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12- 13 March 2015
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 46 part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 assembly and 10 of acts of worship.
- 5 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 Mary Coyle	Lead Inspector
Miss Nicola Walsh	Associate Inspector
Mr Stuart Alexander	Associate Inspector
Mrs Sinead Steed	Associate Inspector
Mrs Carol Ransom	Associate Inspector
Mr Roberto Giovanelli	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>

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