

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

68 Georges Road, Holloway, N7 8JN

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: Date 24 January 2020



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The religious education curriculum meets all of the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* in an outstanding way.
- The school's very strong Catholic identity permeates all aspects of the learning environment of the school.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in religious education are outstanding.
- Pupils display an excellent attitude towards their learning in their Catholic faith. They are extremely religiously literate and confidently demonstrate their religious knowledge, which is underpinned by an excellent understanding of the theology, appropriate to their ages. Pupils are articulate in speaking about their faith and confidently link scripture messages to their daily lives.
- Pupils get a very good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage through a rich, vibrant and nurturing environment.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and the well-resourced curriculum ensure high quality religious education is being taught across the school. Teaching is always good and often outstanding at all levels across the school.
- The very strong and collaborative leadership team work exceptionally well together and are very well deployed to ensure the highest quality of learning for all pupils.
- The very knowledgeable governors are outstanding in their support and challenge of the teaching of religious education. The succinct self-evaluation document provides an accurate evaluation of the strengths and areas for development.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school fully meets the 10% curriculum time requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- The governing body very generously funds all aspects of religious education and the Catholic life of the school.
- Religious education is given a very high status and is at the core of the curriculum.
- The school's mission statement 'To go forward together in Christ, to respect our neighbour and to always give our best' is lived out daily at Sacred Heart School.
- The provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils experience a breadth and richness of Catholic tradition and as a result demonstrate a very strong understanding of what it means to live their lives according to Catholic teaching and traditions.
- The partnership with parents, school and parish is outstanding. Parents spoken to during the inspection and the recent parent questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. There are strong and regular links with the diocese.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of their call to social justice and human flourishing and demonstrate their readiness to be of service to others through their many acts of charity.
- The leadership of the executive headteacher, religious education and senior leaders in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding in every way.
- The very able and committed governing body know the school well and is supportive and ambitious for its future.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

As part of the school's rigorous support, monitoring and mentoring all teaching across the school is at least good and more often outstanding. There is a clear commitment to ensure that all staff are well supported and best practice is shared as part of a regular monitoring cycle.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of classroom religious education throughout all key stages meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). The curriculum meets pupils' learning needs in a highly creative and engaging way. Pupils were attentive, respectful and engaged due to the high quality and creative teaching. Pupils understood what was expected of them and what they need to do to improve. Throughout the school, there was clear evidence of differentiated tasks and pupils were both supported and challenged. Support staff were very well deployed to support pupils with additional needs. The teaching of other faiths was evident in pupils' books and with discussions during lessons. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'There are similarities between all faiths like holy books; the Bible and Quran and buildings to worship in like a church, a synagogue and a mosque.'

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

The achievement of pupils in religious education (RE) is very good, in line with, and in some cases better than in other core subjects. Religious education is very well resourced and teachers are very creative in the way resources are used to support children's learning and provide for a range of learning styles, needs and abilities. Progression across the school is clearly evident in well-presented pupils' workbooks, in discussions and during lessons. Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning and these have a definite impact on the progress they make. Assessment of pupils' work is robust and rigorous and the school participates in deanery and diocesan moderation events to continue to develop their moderation practice and so ensure the accuracy of their judgements. Achievement is tracked in RE in the same way as all other core subjects in a well-established and understood way by all staff. All groups are analysed to ensure progress for all. Using a similar model used in other core subjects, RE groups in upper Key Stage 2, allows for leadership team expertise to teach for greater depth. The executive headteacher ensures close collaboration between both schools he leads and this supports the sharing of best practice and continuous professional development. All pupils are assessed termly and awarded an age-related standard, which is included in the school's assessment system. Information is formally shared with parents termly and in a detailed end of year report. Pupils know and understand what they need to do in order to improve their work and there is clear evidence of pupils working at greater depth. Dialogue between teachers and pupils takes place regularly and the school have recently introduced half-termly pupil conferencing, ensuring the teacher and child reflect on progress and next steps. Pupils' religious literacy is very good and they are confident in their use of religious language in both discussions and written work.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

The quality of teaching at Sacred Heart School is judged outstanding, leading to the rapid progress made by all groups of pupils across the school. Teaching is creative, challenging and engaging ensuring that pupils enjoy their lessons. A wide variety of teaching strategies are used across the school ensuring the needs of all pupils are met including; hot seating, role play, prompt cards, art and design, poetry and group work. This ensures that a very cross-curricular approach is used in RE lessons and was most evident in the recent teaching of 'Laudato Si' where the teaching was enhanced by the use of art and geography in RE lessons. A wonderful display demonstrates this work. In

Reception classes, children were learning about symbols that can help them to talk to God. Children were looking at 'Chi-Rho' symbols and were engaged in tasks to support their learning. A group of children told inspectors, 'You can see Chi-Rhos on the clothes the priest wears and it means he wants to follow Jesus.' All teachers have high expectations of pupils and pupil engagement in all classes was of an impressive high standard. Pupils across Year 3 classes were clearly and confidently able to make links between the beliefs of Mother Teresa and scripture. Higher order thinking skills are routinely built into lessons to challenge pupils. These can be seen in challenge tasks enabling pupils to evidence number 7 ('I use evidence from other lessons') of the Learning Ladder in the schools '3-5-7' vision. Pupils confidently use religious vocabulary throughout their discussions in lessons. Marking and next step questions are well developed and pupils were able to confidently explain how it helps them to improve their work. The RE subject leaders and leadership team ensure there is rigorous, regular and robust support and monitoring, ensuring the very good teaching is maintained and that pupils make accelerated progress. Sacred Heart School recently received the Gold Artsmark award and this has supported the enhanced creativity in lessons across the school. Support staff are very well deployed and have an invaluable role in supporting the learning for all abilities. Behaviour of pupils in lessons, on the playground and around the school is exemplary.

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

The quality of leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. The two religious education leaders work very closely together and have a passion to ensure that every pupil flourishes. Leaders at all levels demonstrate a commitment to continued school improvement and to ensuring that the strong Catholic ethos of the school permeates all areas of school life. School self-evaluation is highly accurate, reflective and is strongly evidence based. As a result of the continued focus on school improvement, there is an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development in religious education. Teachers are very well supported through resources, mentoring and professional development. The executive headteacher leads two schools and has a clear commitment to encouraging staff to leadership roles in Catholic education. Teaching is regularly and robustly monitored and staff supported at all levels. The documentation and record keeping provided to the inspection team was comprehensive and of a very high standard. The governing body is both ably led and committed to the school and the parish priest is a regular and much welcomed visitor throughout the school.

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

- Continue to develop assessment and tracking in line with the new Age Related Standards.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Pupils across the school are confident in planning and leading acts of worship. The priests in the parish have started leading a weekly worship in upper Key Stage 2; further strengthening the links between school and parish. As a result, pupils are more aware of the importance of worship and the variety of forms it can take.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is at the heart of the school's ethos and teaching and at the core of the curriculum. The school fully meets the 10% curriculum time requirement set by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The school's Catholic identity is very evident upon entering the school building through the religious displays, artwork and iconography around the school. Every classroom has an appropriate prayer area and RE working walls reflect what the children are being taught in the current topic and celebrates their work. The school has a unique '3-5-7' vision for all aspects of school life: 3 School Rules, 5 Keys and 7 Learning Ladder steps. This vision is understood and articulated by all pupils. The very vibrant and abundant displays around the school demonstrate the creativity and range of topics being taught. Pupils were confident to share what being at this Catholic school meant to them. One pupil said, 'Sacred Heart has prepared me for my next step to secondary school; I feel stronger.' Pupils are articulate in sharing their faith and are very proud of their school. The governors place great importance on Catholic values being at work in all their planning and decision-making. They offer outstanding support to the executive headteacher in his role as leader of two schools and the senior leadership team.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are central to the life of this school and are outstanding. There are numerous opportunities throughout the school for daily collective worship and prayer. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are introduced very early to the prayer life of the school in an age appropriate way. All classes have prayer areas, a prayer focus and appropriate liturgical colours. Pupil led worship is embedded across the school at age appropriate levels and pupils are confident in leading these acts of worship. Inspectors had many opportunities to be part of pupil led worship on the day of inspection. Displays of pupil work around the school are of a high standard. Friends of Sacred Heart (FOSH), the parish catechists and the school jointly organize a Thanksgiving Mass and celebration for pupils who have made their First Holy Communion. The celebration of the Eucharist is carefully planned both in school and in the local parish and many other celebrations are offered at key times throughout the liturgical year such as Benediction, Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross and the rosary. 'The Wednesday Word' is used to introduce the following week's gospel and is used to support class worship on a weekly basis. The liturgical year is the foundation of all religious experiences within the school. The exceptionally strong school/parish links ensure that the celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the school's Catholic tradition.

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

is outstanding

The school's contribution to the Common Good and social justice is outstanding. The 'Chaplaincy Team' are very proud of their school and their newsletter, 'Chaplaincy Chat.' They spoke very confidently about the Common Good and helping others, including raising money for Cafod, Poppy Appeal, The Catholic Children's Society, Shoebox Appeal and The Passage. Pupil achievements are

regularly celebrated through assemblies and weekly awards are given for following the school rules: 'Ready, Respectful and Safe' for pupils who are living examples of following in Jesus' path. On the feast of Sacred Heart Day, pupils looked at how they could protect 'Our Common Home' following Pope Francis' 'Laudato Si' and focused on small actions within the community that could help to protect God's creation. Not only do pupils actively engage in acts of service but they have an excellent knowledge of the theology underpinning their actions.

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, parish and diocese are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the school's work. One parent said, 'Sacred Heart School is a continuation of home in supporting my children in their faith.' Another said, 'the school prepares my child well to know more about their faith.' Parents spoke with passion of the mission of the school and how the parish links are, 'the real strength of the school'. They believe their children eager to learn about their religion and share what they learn at home. The school encourages the children to pray at home starting with the 'Prayer Bear' bag in Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents receive the 'Wednesday Word' each week as well as newsletters and tweets giving them information about school. The parish priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school and works closely with the religious education leaders in preparing Masses and liturgies. The school supports diocesan led professional development as well as taking part in deanery opportunities with local schools.

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

is outstanding

The school's leadership team is fully committed to the Church's mission in an outstanding way. The school mission statement, 'To go forward together in Christ, to respect our neighbour and to always give our best,' is embedded across the school. The executive headteacher and his highly competent team are ambitious and have an outstanding commitment to continued improvement in all areas. The school's self-evaluation is an honest and accurate assessment of the strengths and areas for improvement. School leaders at all levels are passionate about their school and are fully committed to the Church's mission in education. Governors are committed and conscientious in their role. They know their school well and play an active part in the school community.

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

- To develop further the role of pupil chaplains
- To continue the shared use of the Saint Margaret Mary Annexe ensuring pupils and families have opportunities to benefit further from the already strong links that exist between the school and parish.

Information about this school

- The school is a two-form form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Holloway, Islington.
- The school serves the parishes of The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Holloway and Saint Gabriel, Upper Holloway.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 82%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 10% and from other faiths is 3%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 64%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 7.
- There are 12% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 9 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.
- 51% pupils receive the Pupil Premium (248).
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Department for Education Number	206 3384
Unique Reference Number	100437
Local Authority	Islington
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	472
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Teresa Nunn
Executive Headteacher	Mr John Lane
Telephone number	020 7607 3407
Website	www.sacredheart.islington.sch.uk
Email address	admin@sacredheart.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2015
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 17 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 Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Ann Staunton

Lead Inspector

Mrs Mary Ainger

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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