

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School

Bury Walk, Cale Street, London SW3 6QH

Date of inspection: 3rd February 2016



A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade 2

Overall, classroom religious education is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning in religious education are consistently positive. Teaching is typically never less than good with some aspects of outstanding teaching. However, there is some variation throughout the school, particularly in the way children are supported in understanding their next steps in learning. The link governor for religious education is actively involved in the support of religious education and is very familiar with current developments. He contributes effectively to the subject's growth in the school. The leadership of the subject ensures that staff are supported in their own professional development in religious education. Pupils' religious literacy is good and they are confident in their use of religious language. Their overall achievement in religious education is not as strong, however, as in other core areas. This is partly because staff are not fully confident in their understanding of how to set tasks so that pupils can reach the highest available levels.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade 1

The school's leadership is committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrates this exceptionally well. Governors offer ongoing support and challenge to the leadership team. No aspect of the daily life of the school is left unobserved in reflecting its mission of Catholic education. All staff, Catholic and non-Catholic, are encouraged and expected to take an active role in the Catholic life of the school. There is a very close relationship between school and parish. Close proximity to the Brompton Oratory ensures that the pupils experience the rich traditions of the Oratory church. Together, senior leaders and the governors promote very effectively a vision of discipleship for life for staff and pupils. They are actively involved in classroom and whole-school acts of worship. Pupils take their roles and responsibilities seriously in contributing to the Common Good. For example, they enjoy and relish their Owl and Owlet relationships with the Reception pupils and understand the importance of their role and, at their own level, the reasons for helping others. Partnership with parents is strong, and links with the parish excellent. The school is extending its links to work with other diocesan schools, particularly in developing religious education in the classroom. Prayer and worship are central to the school with pupils increasingly taking responsibility for preparing and leading worship.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, observed all seven classes, one assembly and one class based act of worship, and carried out four interviews with school staff, pupils, parents and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of the Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School, Kensington and Chelsea, was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Inspection Team

Mrs Jackie Cox	Lead Inspector
Mrs Sheila Nolan	Associate Inspector
Miss Catherine Bryan	Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a one-form entry in the LA of Kensington and Chelsea. The school serves the parishes of the Brompton Oratory and Holy Redeemer. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 99.5%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 0% and from other Faiths 0.5%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 57%.

There are 210 pupils on roll, with 3 pupils with statements of special educational need/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is a well below average rate of families claiming free school meals. Eleven pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

Telephone:	020 7589 5900
e-mail address:	info@oratory.rbkc.sch.uk

DFE Number:	207 3379
URN Number:	100491

Headteacher:	Mrs Jane Griffiths
Chair of Governors:	Rev. George Bowen

Date of previous inspection:	20 th September 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	Outstanding

Key for inspection grades:	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
	<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

A new scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection. This has enabled the school to work with other cluster schools towards a shared understanding of the curriculum. Targets for religious education are now set termly. Pupils have tailor-made exercise books in line with other core subjects. The school website has been updated with a section now devoted to religious education. The Wednesday Word throughout the school is part of the weekly homework provision.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 2

When planning for each topic, teachers identify which aspects of the Curriculum Directory are visited. This curriculum directory content is clearly linked to lesson planning and meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Pupils learn using a broad variety of resources and experiences as well as using different learning styles. During the inspection, it was clear that all pupils had studied both Islam and Judaism during the Autumn term. The pupils spoke about the importance of this because of living in a multi-faith world. Most pupils were able to confidently talk about their learning experiences so far this year. End of topic assemblies give pupils and teachers a regular opportunity to see how learning progresses from class to class.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 2

Pupils' attitudes to learning, including individual, group and whole-class work, are consistently positive and have a very positive impact on the progress they make. Where next steps guidance is used effectively, this contributes well to pupils' good progress. Pupils' religious literacy is good and they are confident in their use of religious language. During the inspection, pupils were supported in their thinking and understanding through some carefully structured questioning during carpet and talk-partner time. By the end of Year 6, attainment in religious education is below that of other core subjects. The most able pupils are not always challenged enough to ensure that they make at least good progress in their knowledge and understanding. Progress and attainment are measured against the diocesan levels of attainment and 'I can statements' in the early years. The school moderates religious education internally as well as at deanery and diocesan level. However, staff have yet to develop planning to provide the best opportunities and challenges for pupils to achieve those higher levels of knowledge and understanding.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

Teaching is consistently good or better and results in most children making progress and achieving well over time. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent and children respond to praise and encouragement. Homework contributes well to pupils' learning. Teachers cultivate a positive ethos for learning and activities are planned that encourage pupils to use the Bible and to reflect on

passages of Scripture in all classes. Teachers use a variety of ways to keep religious education fresh, engaging and relevant. These include research using ICT, drama, paired and group work, debate and discussion as well as art and craft. As a result, pupils are generally interested, engaged and eager to do well. Over time, most pupils make good progress in their knowledge of the Catholic faith and are confident in expressing their religious literacy and can explain their beliefs. However, activities are not always well matched to pupils' abilities, and, consequently not all pupils achieve as well as they should, particularly the most able.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade I

Leaders at all levels, including governors, have a clear vision for religious education and its impact is clearly evident in the daily life of the school. The link governor for religious education has an excellent understanding of the subject and proactively supports the school's vision through clear structures and monitoring. The link governor has been involved in book monitoring during the Autumn term and was able to discuss this on the day of the inspection. Leaders of the school are interested in ensuring that the pupils achieve their potential and are looking at ways for this to happen. A wide range of continuing professional development is offered to all staff. Three teachers are currently studying for the CCRS and others attend internal and diocesan training. The professional planning partner's initiative this year has further improved subject confidence. Links with other deanery schools are sustained through head teachers' cluster meetings, attendance at deanery and diocesan moderation and shared training for staff. A clear development plan for the continuing improvement of standards is in place and monitored effectively; all staff have a religious education performance management target. In the time since the last inspection, the leaders of religious education have put much in place to improve the provision.

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

- Ensure that teachers continue to develop their confidence and understanding in the assessment of religious education and reflect this in their planning, especially for the most able.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection, the school has introduced weekly child-led acts of worship, monthly topic sharing assemblies, rosary prayer bags and Posada, which is a nativity model including Mary and Jesus which ‘travels’ to different families each night before Christmas. Thus the school facilitates a variety of prayer opportunities at home. Additionally, there is weekly homework for Years 2 upwards, including work based on the Wednesday Word, for the whole school. Bright, colourful and engaging religious education newsletters that celebrate school events are placed regularly on the website.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade I

Religious education receives the 10% of curriculum time at Key Stages 1 and 2 as required by the Bishops’ Conference. Religious education has a high status within the school. It is evident to all that religious education is considered the core of the curriculum and as such, staff are well supported in their professional development for the teaching of religious education. The head and deputy head teacher work incessantly to ensure that the pupils are provided with the best opportunities possible and that staff are continually supported in their professional development. The school is in the process of reviewing the best ways of using accommodation to maximise opportunities for the pupils in religious education.

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

Grade I

The school's provision for prayer, collective worship and liturgy is outstanding and there are daily opportunities for both spontaneous and traditional prayer. The school excels at being a community based on Catholic tradition and practice. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and pupils are offered a rich experience, not least through celebrating the liturgy in the local parish. Close proximity to the Brompton Oratory ensures that the pupils experience the rich traditions of the Oratory church. The new chaplain, one of the Oratorian community, has quickly established himself as a visitor to the school several times a week and regularly provides opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Mass, as well as supporting staff with the religious education curriculum. The liturgical year underpins assemblies and acts of worship which are prepared and led by the children as well as adults. Year 6 prefects take their responsibility to monitor acts of worship, display and prayer areas very seriously.

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

Grade I

The school has a dynamic and creative understanding of the call to ‘human flourishing’ and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents as individuals and as a community. Pupils are actively engaged in supporting those in need and proactive in creative ways

of responding to international appeals. One Year 2 pupil talked about how the children in the school were helping others who were less well off than themselves, by raising money for the NSPCC. Other charities supported include the Catholic Children's Society, Shelter and Lepra as well as pupils having the opportunity to work with older generations. The school is currently discussing ways of developing a more sustained international link which will open up many more opportunities for the pupils and school. The Owl and Owlet initiative shows the Year 6 pupils taking their responsibilities of buddying up with Reception pupils seriously. Children, at their own levels, increasingly understand the theology underpinning their actions.

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

Grade 2

The school is forming links with other local schools in the Diocese. It attends and has hosted deanery meetings. The school has very strong links with the parish. Pupils are prepared for and make their First Holy Communion in the parish church, for example. They have regular opportunities for Mass and other liturgical celebrations in the Oratory church as well as helping socially in events such as the parish garden party. The chair of governors regularly meets with the head teacher and the school chaplain is a regular visitor at the school gates and is available to support staff and families as required. The school attends relevant training at the Diocese for new teachers, leaders and other staff and attends the annual Good Shepherd Mass. The school encourages parents to join in partnership with them but a third of the parents who responded to the questionnaires had concerns. A significant number feel that they do not have enough opportunities to attend school worship. The school also recognises that parents, staff and pupils should be involved in reviewing the mission statement. The school is aware of some of these concerns and is working on minimising them. The rosary prayer bag and Posada are sent home on a rotational basis at key times during the year to encourage prayer at home. These are much valued by both pupils and parents.

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

Grade 1

The school's leadership is committed to the Church's mission in education and demonstrates this in a determined way. Governors share and are actively involved in the strategic leadership of the school. They offer on-going support and challenge to the leadership team. The curriculum committee are involved in the monitoring of religious education display and prayer areas throughout the school. No aspect of the daily life of the school is left unobserved in reflecting the mission of Catholic education through the Catholic life of the school. Staff are supported at all levels to understand the unique and key identity of Catholic schools through induction and ongoing support measures. All staff are encouraged and expected to take an active role in the Catholic life of the school.

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

- Increase opportunities for parents to attend liturgy and other religious events in school.
- Take forward plans to review the school mission statement and ensure that all staff, governors and pupils are familiar with this.