

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

Bishop Douglass Catholic High School



Hamilton Road N2 0SQ.

Date of inspection: 02-03 March 2016

A. Classroom Religious Education

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

Overall Grade I

The overall effectiveness of religious education in developing the students' religious literacy is outstanding. Students benefit greatly from the rich, well-considered curriculum that consistently reflects the Curriculum Directory. Each year, students' work builds progressively so that by the end of Year 11, they achieve highly and even better than in other core areas. Students have bought into the school and departmental ethos in a whole-hearted way, deepening their understanding of the Catholic faith as well as demonstrating determined engagement in their learning. Outstandingly good teaching provided exceptionally well for the students' personal and learning needs. It is accepted as commonplace by all that only the best will do for the students and the staff. The subject leader for religious education has a profound understanding of the school's place in the Church's mission. The staff team is extremely well led and presents excellent examples of determination, perseverance, cooperation and caring to the students. High quality teaching is the norm across the department and robust monitoring and assessment of the work of the department for both students and staff, ensures the best quality of provision in religious education. The department participates not only in moderation activities across its staff but also joins in deanery moderation and assessment activities across the partner schools. Self-evaluation is accurate and used effectively to become ever better. The contribution of the department to the Catholic life of the school is excellent. Governors, through their link governor, contribute effectively to support the work of the religious education department.

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 I

The school's overall effectiveness in developing students' experience of Catholic life and belief is outstanding. Staff at all levels strive to ensure that students flourish and grow into responsible adults, ready to take their place in the world and confident in expressing Christian values in their daily lives. The school fosters a culture where every student is challenged to fulfil their potential. The Catholic life of the school benefits from the clear vision of the headteacher, senior leaders, including the subject leader for religious education, and the governing body. This results in a thriving Catholic community which serves students, parents and staff well. Members of the governing body and senior leaders, together with the religious education department, ensure that Catholic life is at the centre of staff and students experience of school. The contribution of the Chaplain to liturgy, charitable initiatives, student support and the sense of community in Christ is striking. Students benefit from an ethos of encouragement and cooperation to put their faith into practice which underpins all that they do and is woven into every aspect of school life. Members of staff are confident in their roles as members of a Catholic faith community and new staff are well-supported in contributing to the school's Catholic life. This is an inclusive community where diversity is celebrated and respected. Leaders and managers at all levels are exceptionally effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school and the school enjoys high levels of support from parents, where partnerships are strength. The school benefits from strong links with the diocese and works collaboratively with a number of local schools. Governors are supportive of the Catholic life of the school and are well informed through regular reports and welcome visits of the link governor.

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 two days in school, visited 15 lessons and 2 assemblies, 7 acts of collective worship and carried out 7 interviews with school staff, pupils 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 Bishop Douglass School, East Finchley 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

Ms Niamh Brady	Lead Inspector
Mrs Sheila Nolan	Lead Inspector
Mr Christopher Cleugh	Associate Inspector
Ms Rose-Marie Sorohan	Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a six form entry in the LA of Barnet and the locality of East Finchley. The school serves the parishes of St Mary, East Finchley; St Philip's Finchley Central and St Alban's Finchley. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 55%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 24% and from other Faiths 16%. 5% have not declared any faith practice. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 47%.

There are 672 pupils on roll, with 7 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ 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 an above average rate of families claiming free school meals. Two hundred and forty six pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number: 3025408
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Headteacher: Mr Martin Tissot
Chair of Governors: Mr Michael Veal

Date of previous inspection: 11 November 2010
Previous Inspection grades: Good

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?

Since the last inspection, students have benefited from the rigorous implementation of diagnostic feedback and new whole-school marking policy. As a result, students make rapid progress and are very secure in their next steps of learning. The department works collaboratively with other departments in the school with much success in a drive to raise standards. The department has shared its expertise across the school and has been at the forefront of school initiatives, and supporting whole school training.

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

Grade 1

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Schemes of work have been mapped in a structured way to the Curriculum Directory so that it is exceptionally clear where and how the requirements are met. Teaching staff have worked collaboratively on the schemes of work to ensure that they are engaging for the students as well as meeting the learning needs of all groups. As a result, all members of staff teaching religious education have an excellent grasp of the four main areas of the Directory. A three-year course of study for GCSE ensures a rich and progressive sweep of content that includes the study of other faiths. Students from other than the Catholic faith participate fully in the religious education classes. Resources for religious education are thoughtfully and creatively managed, collaboratively adjusted and prepared to support the development of the students' religious literacy. The enhancement of the students' religious vocabulary is well developed in all lessons.

At Key Stage 5, the general religious education course follows the NOCN qualification at Levels 1, 2, and 3, matched to the prior learning of the students. The scheme of work builds on the skills achieved at GCSE and continues to develop further the religious literacy of the students. Students following the successful AS- and A-Level courses delve deeply into key topics and themes and are confidently articulate in exploring ideas, ethical themes, religious experience, and belief, for example.

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

Grade 1

Achievement in religious education is outstanding in all key stages. Students typically attain highly in religious education. Their attainment equals or exceeds their performance in other core subjects. This is a sustained pattern over time. Progress at Key Stage 4 is particularly impressive. From challenging starting points, students' progress is skilfully promoted across the year groups. Examination results in religious education are, on average, half a grade higher than the average for all other subjects. Those post-16 students following Level 3 courses in religious studies do exceptionally well in both A2 and AS examinations. Students' uptake of religious education has grown year-on-year. Students know their target grades, clearly understand how well they are doing, and how to improve. They are confident and enthusiastic learners, who demonstrate high levels of religious literacy. As a result of high quality teaching, robust assessment, systematic moderation with partners and the diocese, regular tracking, and well-targeted interventions, students make exceptional progress in developing religious literacy. The work in students' books demonstrates

determined application to their learning and significant care and pride in their religious education work.

The quality of teaching

Grade I

The quality of teaching in religious education is outstanding. A major strength of teaching is the genuine determination of staff to be 'the best they can be' in line with the school's mission statement. The collaborative and supportive approach to planning, alongside robust monitoring, evaluation, and the professional development of staff, all contribute to sustaining the excellent day-to-day teaching. Very good resources are carefully matched to students' needs so that deep learning is characteristic of work in class. Typically calm, systematic, knowledgeable input from teaching staff is complemented by responsive, cooperative efforts from students. Examples of outstanding teaching abound. In a Key Stage 5 lesson, for example, the skilful scaffolding strategies enabled students with a range of prior learning to confidently grasp and demonstrate an excellent level of understanding of challenging content about the 'dominant conception' in moral theories. Pace, challenge and skilful questioning are consistent features in encouraging the students to think critically and develop their religious literacy. All teachers impart a deep knowledge of the Catholic faith and teach with enthusiasm and confidence. Relationships with pupils are excellent. Success is based upon mutual respect and a collective vision of education and a drive for high achievement which is shared by all. The religious education department ensures commitment to the school's Catholic education mission through the delivery of outstanding teaching. Well-considered homework, supplemented by challenge tasks, is relentlessly pursued by both staff and students to consolidate and advance learning.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade I

Leadership and management of religious education are second to none. The department models an outstanding leadership approach that has as its vision 'the very best' for each student. The collaborative team of staff are role models for the students in creating a thriving Catholic community where each person is valued and academic excellence fostered. The commonality of approach to school initiatives results in a department which is a beacon of excellence and a key driver in raising standards across the school. The creativity that the team brings to bear in interpreting the curriculum to meet the students' needs is outstanding. The subject leader's calm, determined and supportive approach to developing the students' religious literacy is seen in the relentless pursuit of being ever better. Monitoring, evaluation, moderation, accurate assessment and training, all combine to provide a seamless approach to promoting the centrality of religious education and its impact on the daily life of the school. Staff new to the school are sensitively inducted into what is expected of them just as staff across the school are supported in promoting the school's Catholic ethos. The highly effective leadership of religious education clearly understands the importance of sustaining excellent practice, developing staff, and accurately determining where improvement is needed.

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

- To continue to develop the subject knowledge of staff in light of curriculum change
- To encourage a greater proportion of staff in the school to study for the Catholic Teachers Certificate

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?

The department has striven tirelessly to support the Catholic life of the school by working in closer liaison with pastoral leaders to ensure that collective acts of worship have an appropriate liturgical theme. The proportion of timetabled lessons has increased to reflect the Bishops Conference requirements. Links with local parishes and feeder primary schools have strengthened considerably.

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

Grade I

Religious education is truly at the heart of the school, influencing not only the school's Catholic life but also the academic performance of the students. It is evident to all, staff, parents and pupils that religious education is the core of the curriculum. The excellent results and progress set the standard to which other departments aspire. The recently adjusted allocation of curriculum time meets the requirements as required by the Bishops' Conference. The department is staffed by five specialists, each with a dedicated classroom. The capitation that the department receives is in line with other core subjects and the school is generous in its support of professional development for the department. There is an allocated governor for religious education who visits the school frequently and offers support and constructive advice. The head of religious education attends senior management team meetings, ensuring that the Catholic ethos is central to the school's planning and daily work. The school benefits greatly from a dedicated chaplain and from a school chapel.

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

Grade I

The outstanding range of opportunities for prayer and worship is central to all that the school offers on a daily basis. Opportunities for reflection and prayer are included at the start of all staff and student gatherings. Assemblies, liturgies and masses follow the liturgical cycle and the students are actively engaged in their planning through the student spirituality leaders who represent all years, for example, in preparing the whole-school masses to celebrate Christmas and Easter. Class masses are included as part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and these are themed by the form groups who prepare the bidding prayers, serve and read. The Easter Eucharist service is planned by Year 9 as part of their religious education curriculum. This included a dramatization of the Last Supper, and the Advent Service, included a liturgical dance performed by Year 8. The Gospel choir adds colour and reverence to the celebrations. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered in both Advent and Lent and is also available to staff and pupils throughout the year. There is also a weekly voluntary Mass which is well attended by staff and pupils. In Advent and Lent, there is daily invitation to give "Two Minutes for Jesus", a reflection which is frequently prepared and led by the Sixth Form Spirituality Leaders. The Catholic identity of the school is evident throughout; not only in the chapel, and Prayer Garden where all pupils in Lent can reflect on the Stations of the Cross, but also throughout the school, in and out of classrooms, through stunning displays and artefacts. Special assemblies are planned and prepared by the students to celebrate patron saints for example St George, and St Edmund Campion. There is an annual age appropriate retreat for all year groups

either at a local parish or at SPEC. These are highly valued by the students as an integral part of their faith journey. Although the students' experience of Catholic life is highly positive, there is scope to develop the spiritual dimensions of assemblies even further.

The school community has responded enthusiastically to Pope Francis' message in this holy Year of Mercy. This includes at the 'Mercy Door' at the entrance of the Chapel, a special work book for Key Stage 3 and thought-provoking display. These activities remind students of the value of their commitment and response to corporal and spiritual acts of mercy. The Chaplain gives outstanding witness and spiritual guidance to the whole community. His priestly presence is valued by all, irrespective of faith background. He works closely with the religious education department and senior leadership team to promote the Catholic life of the school and has had a crucial role in developing links with the local parishes. On the odd occasion when a non-Catholic student requires provision for prayer, the school acts sensitively in supporting such requests.

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

Grade I

The school's commitment to the Common Good and social justice is outstanding. The behaviour of the students across the school is excellent. Their manners are exemplary and they respect and value their teachers and other adult staff. They are proud to belong to the school as one sixth former explained "the school has a real sense of community and encourages you to live and walk with Christ". The students' actions exemplify that they live out the school's Mission Statement. They strive to be the best they can be in every activity in which they engage. Students are awarded points for good effort and work on the 'e-praise' website and these are converted into donations to CAFOD. Students demonstrate an excellent understanding of the theological basis for serving others locally, nationally and internationally. This Lent, in the Year of Mercy, the school is focussing support on the Passage recognising the plight of the homeless in London. On a regular basis, students fundraise for many charities including Westminster Catholic Children's Society, MacMillan Cancer Care and the Poor Clares. There are many engagements with the local community. These include service for local senior citizens including a monthly Tea Dance hosted by the sixth form and a Christmas lunch hosted by Year 10 - both supported by fundraising. Some students also regularly visit the residents at Nazareth House and it is planned that this work will be developed further in the near future. There are growing links with feeder Catholic primary schools with booster classes and taster days for their children. The school also responds regularly to offer both prayer and financial support for international emergencies for example the Syrian refugee crisis and the devastating hurricane in the Philippines. Students flourish at Bishop Douglass School and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

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 I

Parents are very supportive of the life and work of the school in promoting Catholic education. Attendance at school events is high and all parents are invited to attend and celebrate key events with the school community from a Mass of welcome at the start of the year to Advent services held at the school. A recently completed questionnaire shows overwhelming support for the school and its leadership. Parents are kept well informed of the Catholic life of the school through weekly newsletters, termly publications and key information shared through the school's website. Teaching staff avail of training opportunities provided by the diocese. They regularly attend INSET and cluster

meetings, working in close collaboration with other primary and secondary Catholic schools and with its diocesan advisor. Links with the local parishes are strengthening. Local clergy support the school in the celebration of the liturgy and the sacrament of reconciliation. The students benefit greatly from the work of the school chaplain who celebrates the Eucharist for class masses as well as ministering to the staff and students on a regular basis.

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

Grade I

Leadership and management of this Catholic school are outstanding in promoting its Catholic life. Bishop Douglass School genuinely expresses its understanding of itself through its mission statement, 'to be the best we can be..... supporting each other within our Catholic community'. The leadership of the school is fully committed to the Church's mission in education. There are excellent systems in place to support staff new to teaching and new to the school so that there is a clear understanding of what is expected in promoting the school's Catholic ethos, whatever the traditions of the staff. Governors are well informed and provide good support to the school, acting as critical friends, including overseeing the school's Catholic life. School leaders are the driving force in the school's improvement journey. Self –evaluation is accurate and rigorous. There are clear systems in place for parents, staff and students to make their views known.

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

- To provide a wider range of opportunities for pupils to lead and actively participate in assemblies.
- To have a more sustained approach to supporting international links to charities