

St. Mary's Priory Catholic Infant School

Hermitage Rd., London, N15 5RE



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 26 May 2022

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- A good curriculum is offered, based on the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*.
- Most pupils make good progress in their knowledge of the Catholic faith and their religious literacy is well developed for their age and ability.
- Attainment is at least as good as in other core subjects.
- Pupils have a positive attitude, helping them to make good progress.
- Leaders ensure there is regular participation in internal and external moderation.
- Teaching is never less than consistently good.
- Teaching is creative and ensures pupils are actively engaged.
- Pupils can identify their next steps in learning through effective feedback from teachers.
- The contribution of religious education to the Catholic life of the school is strong.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- On occasion, opportunities for pupils to work at deeper levels of understanding and produce extended pieces of writing are missed.
- Activities are not always matched to the needs all learners and do not always provide challenge to deepen pupils' understanding.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- Pupils are offered a good Catholic education that provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to understand a Catholic way of living.
- Resources, staffing, and accommodation are good.
- Prayer and worship are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school.
- The school promotes strong links with parents and other Catholic schools.
- Gifts are celebrated and pupils are taught to value each other and respect the opinions of others.
- Leadership encourages staff and pupils to deepen their understanding of the distinctiveness of this Catholic school.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils experience of prayer and worship is not sufficiently deepened and developed as they move through the school.
- Pupils do not have a clear understanding of the theology underpinning their actions.
- Pupil leadership needs to be further developed.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection St. Mary's Priory Infant School has successfully addressed the issues raised. Feedback is now effective, and the leader of religious education supports, mentors, and coaches Early Years and Key Stage 1. Support staff are mostly effective in their roles.

The content of classroom religious education is good

In St. Mary's Priory Infant School, leaders have ensured that the Curriculum Directory as agreed by the Bishops of England and Wales forms the basis of the content of religious education. As part of this work, leaders have also included a comprehensive and age-appropriate study of other religions. Inspectors observed that lessons have a creative approach: in one Early Years lesson instruments were used to good effect to demonstrate the coming of the Holy Spirit as the disciples gathered in the Upper Room.

Resources are used effectively to enhance learning in religious education lessons and inspectors observed a range of artifacts to enhance learning of other faiths. The development of content at a deeper level is not yet embedded, leaders are aware that this is an area for development and have begun to address this issue.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Leaders have put good structures and systems in place to measure progress, the school's own internal moderation system is effective and the school attends deanery and diocesan moderation. There is evidence of progress measured against standards, however assessment procedures are not yet robust. Attainment is as good as other core subjects.

Pupils' attitude to learning is good and this impacts positively on the progress made.

Inspectors observed that religious literacy is good. In a Year 1 lesson pupils were confident discussing Biblical characters during peer discussion. Pupils were able to recall previous learning about the road to Emmaus and the women who discovered the empty tomb. Pupils could make links with previous learning and recognised the role Mary Magdalene played as a bridging person linking events before and after Jesus' death. In Year 2 lessons inspectors observed that teachers had sound subject knowledge, lessons were well structured and additional adults played a significant role enabling pupils to access learning. Feedback in books was effective in informing pupils of their next steps as well celebrating successes. Lessons observed were creative, drama and role play were used to enhance learning resulting in engaged pupils making good progress.

In some lessons observed pupils were not given tasks that closely matched their ability. As a result, there were missed opportunities to extend learning further. Inspectors looked at religious education books and observed that too few opportunities were provided for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good; most pupils make good progress and achieve well over time.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are confident teaching religious education; lessons are engaging and this contributes to pupils' good progress. In an Early Years Foundation observed lesson the teacher turned off the lights to create awe and wonder. This attention to detail set a prayerful

atmosphere as pupils sat with Pentecost hats on their heads, discussing the objects placed in a circle. Religious vocabulary such as “death, resurrection and ascension” was made available for pupils to use and sequence events. In another Early Years class the teacher used prosody to greet pupils in different languages and consolidate learning about the disciples speaking to the crowd in many languages. Teachers are skilled at using effective teaching strategies and create a positive climate where pupils feel confident and are eager to do well. Pupils are interested and engaged; they were eager to share their work with inspectors. Pupils are provided with detailed feedback in the Infant School, however on occasion this impacts on the pace of lessons and new learning is restricted.

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

Leadership of religious education has been significantly impacted by the recent Covid pandemic. This coupled with a recent change in school leadership has led to a period of turbulence in the leadership of religious education. Prior to this, good systems and structures were in place, and these were effective in ensuring that the quality of religious education remained stable. Religious education continued to influence all aspects of the school. This is evident in the communal displays and prayer focus in classrooms. Teachers have high expectations, however tasks planned do not always meet the needs of every pupil, and challenge of more able pupils is an issue. Leadership actively supports staff professional development; time is given to planning units of work and the leader of religious education makes herself readily available during these sessions to support staff and provide opportunities for sharing ideas.

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

- Ensure opportunities are provided for pupils to engage with new learning and as they make progress, to produce extended pieces of writing.
- Ensure tasks are meeting needs of all learners.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

St. Mary's Priory Infant School has addressed the issues from the last inspection. Pupils have been leading liturgy at age-appropriate levels across the liturgical cycle. The school has recently adopted the 'Mini Vinnies' programme to develop the leadership skills of pupils, but this has yet to become embedded.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

Leaders of St Mary's Priory Infant School ensure that religious education meets the Bishops' requirement for 10% curriculum time in every key stage. Religious education has a good status within the school and the parent community. Parents recently attended a liturgy for the crowning of Our Lady and told inspectors that they were pleased to go into school again after the pandemic. Governors have ensured that religious education has a good budget, and this is in line with other core subjects. Staff allocation and accommodation are good. The leadership team and governors are committed to supporting the review and development of religious education and offer good support. St. Mary's Priory Infant School is not attached to a parish as the school was founded by the Servite Order; hence leaders have made a significant effort to establish links with neighbouring parishes to support families.

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

is good

Prayer and worship are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school. Pupils are taught traditional prayers and during the month of May prayed the rosary daily. Pupils plan worship and clearly enjoy this responsibility. Pupils regularly pray each day and prayer spaces in classrooms are attractive and reflect the liturgical year. The local priest gives generously of his time and supports leaders to ensure that pupils' spiritual and moral development are well provided for. Pupils from other faith traditions experience understanding and respect for their religious traditions. In a Year 2 collective act of worship observed, pupils led worship and were clearly used to doing this. They read from Scripture and invited responses by inviting pupils to write on a paperchain. They explained the mission 'how can you help out in our community?' very clearly to other pupils. Inspectors observed that pupils were respectful of one another and responded very well during their worship. Pupils understand the structure of collective acts of worship, however more detail needs to be taught about paying attention to mood and setting as well as providing opportunities for different forms of prayer.

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

is good

Pupils in this school have a good understanding of the call to human flourishing, they celebrate their talents and gifts in "star of the week" assemblies and enjoy seeing the success of others. Pupils are respectful of each other; they listen to each other and understand that they have a call to serve. Pupils also work hard to support charities globally, for example they supported Ukrainian refugees by holding a talent contest and understood the need to help, however they were not clear about the theology underpinning their actions.

St. Mary's Priory Infant School actively encourages pupils to give freely of their time and energy and uses the liturgical year to enable various activities to take place for the local community. Pupils were keen to set up a school food bank after seeing how successful a local area foodbank was proving to

be. Inspectors met with the recently established 'Mini Vinnies'. Pupils knew the mission statement and applied it to their behaviour in school; they were less clear about what was meant by the 'Common Good' although they could discuss their fundraising locally, nationally, and globally. Pupil leadership is beginning to flourish in this 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 good

St. Mary's Priory Infant School is now beginning to invite parents back into school after the pandemic. A statue of Our Lady stands outside the Senario Centre, and parents were recently invited to come in to pray as Our Lady was being crowned. Parents have missed being a part of school liturgies and are appreciative that opportunities to attend are returning. When the schools became federated in 2006 there was no attached parish, the result of this is that leaders have actively sought to forge links with accommodating clergy from nearby parishes to ensure pupils understand that it is the parish that is the main experience of church for Catholics. This fact, coupled with falling admission rates has meant that the school has been successfully creative in its approach to engaging families. The school participates with the many services offered by the Diocese to ensure that staff, governors, and pupils are aware of their place as a Catholic school within Westminster. A parental survey returned 156 responses; parents are overwhelmingly supportive of this school. Parents in Early Years are very pleased with the support pupils have received and spoke highly of the progress made. Parents would like to see a more structured approach to religious education homework. A parent commented 'I am so grateful for this good Catholic school where my child makes good progress.'

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

is good

A new headteacher has been appointed and at the time of the inspection had been in place for five weeks. In the year preceding this inspection, senior leadership had been operating on a reduced level due to Covid staff absences. Leaders are now seeking to further strengthen leadership of religious education and are actively considering a team-based approach. St. Mary's mission statement '*To love one another as Mary loves Jesus and Jesus loves us. To do our best always. To take care of ourselves and the world God has given us*' is everywhere in school and pupils explained that this helps them understand what it means to be in a Catholic school. Pupils know their mission statement and understand its significance.

Leadership strongly and creatively expresses its support for the Catholic mission of education and ensures all policies and practices reflect that mission. Leadership has ensured high-quality in-service training supports staff to understand how every aspect of the education offered at St. Mary's derives from its mission. Governors make a strong contribution and their regular attention to the areas of Catholic life of the school ensures the school makes good progress.

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

- Fully develop prayer in all its forms and ensure worship follows an agreed structure.
- Ensure pupils have a sound understanding of the theology underpinning their actions.
- Further develop and enhance pupil leadership.

Information about this school

- St. Mary's Priory Infant School is a two-form entry Catholic VA school in the locality of Haringey.
- The school serves the parishes of St Ignatius, Stamford Hill and St John Vianney, West Green Road.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 49%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 18% and from other faiths is 18%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith 15%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 6.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 0.
- There are 14% 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 87%.
- There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 25% of pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

Department for Education Number	3093505
Unique Reference Number	102147
Local Authority	Haringey

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 -7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	159
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Martha Hawting
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Ronan
Telephone number	02088009305
Website	www.stmaryspriory.co.uk
Email address	admin@sstmaryspriory.haringey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	January 2016
Classroom religious education	Good
The Catholic life of the school	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 7 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 of act 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.

Ms Evelyn Ward

Lead Inspector

Mrs Yvonne Rutherford

Associate Inspector

Mrs Joanne Walsh

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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