

Our Lady of Muswell Catholic Primary School

Pages Lane, Muswell Hill, London N10 1PS

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 23 May 2018



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- The religious education programme is securely based on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- The curriculum in religious education is dynamic and creative.
- Resources are very well used to ensure pupil progress and engagement.
- 'Next step' questioning is moving the pupils' knowledge on very well.
- Pupils speak highly of their religious education lessons and how they are encouraged to reflect on their own lives.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils.
- Pupils are expected to work both independently and collaboratively.
- Teaching and marking is regularly monitored and evaluated to help towards improvement.
- The religious education subject leader is proactive in supporting and developing challenging teaching strategies with the staff.
- The vision of the school leadership focusing on religious education is clearly communicated to staff, pupils and parents.
- An ethos of encouragement and delight in pupil progress has been established by the leadership and management in the school.
- New staff receive thorough induction into both the Catholic ethos and the religious education curriculum.
- Other schools have been signposted to visit the school to gain insight on outstanding practice.
- The governors are outstanding in their support and insight of the teaching of religious education at Our Lady of Muswell.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school devotes at least 10% of classroom curriculum time to religious education in accordance with the expectations of the Bishops' Conference.
- Religious education is at the heart of the school's teaching and life.
- The school's Catholic identity is very well portrayed by the religious displays round the school.
- Respectful pupil behaviour and courtesy is a very notable characteristic of the school.
- The governors place the highest importance on the Catholic values being at work in all their planning and deliberations.
- The provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is outstanding.
- Catholic Social Teaching is at the heart of the school's commitment to the Common Good.
- Pupils are very well taught that working for the Common Good involves taking on responsibilities and duties.
- The partner and buddy systems provide very effective community building.
- Pupils are given a very good introduction to other faiths.
- The close links with the parish and the support of parish priest provide for good cooperation and local initiatives.
- The school has been effective in building up the partnership between home, school and parish.
- The leadership and management of Our Lady of Muswell School are outstanding.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspection report identified that the school intended to introduce a tracking system to monitor and analyse progress in religious education (RE). The school was also to continue close monitoring of the delivery of religious education, including network partnerships for moderation to improve attainment at end of Key Stage 2. The school has fully accomplished the proposals from the last inspection and gone on to develop them further. Marking in RE has improved and is now very focused and specific in indicating what pupils need to do to take the next step. Children complete an assessment lesson for each unit of work. The school has shown substantial improvement in focusing on appropriate teaching strategies. There is in place the important emphasis on self-evaluation on the part of both teachers and pupils.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The religious education curriculum is securely based on a Catholic religious education programme which conforms to Catholic teaching and the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD). The school has been exceptionally well focused on extending and building on this programme so that pupils at Our Lady of Muswell find it challenging, creative and engaging. The teachers show confidence and creativity in using it, adapting it well to the particular needs of the pupils. The school, under the guidance of the headteacher and the RE coordinator, works very well to produce lesson plans which are the basis for both the outstanding content of classroom religious education as well as its delivery. The teachers have continuous access to the RECD links in each step of their teaching thus ensuring the pupils receive the coherent and developing understanding of teaching of the Church. The curriculum in RE is dynamic and resources are very well used to ensure pupil engagement and progress. Pupils spoke very well and with confidence about what they were learning in RE classes and what it meant to them. In the week of the inspection, the school was teaching about Islam across the school. The delivery was informed and gave the pupils in an age appropriate manner good knowledge and insight into Muslim beliefs and practices.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

Pupil's achievement overall is judged to be outstanding. Data shows that achievement is exceptional for all pupils, with some pupils making rapid and accelerated progress. From the book scrutiny, there is evidence of how the school ensures that levels of learning and attainment are matched to the needs and abilities of all. Moderation takes place frequently at school, as well as involvement at deanery and diocesan levels to ensure accuracy. Next step questioning, which has been a whole school focus, allows for challenge and enables the children to demonstrate their religious literacy and move their learning on. Pupils interviewed stated 'when you excel in a certain area of RE your teacher will always challenge you further'. Teaching staff model a high level of religious literacy themselves and pupils show real enthusiasm to join in with this. They have been supported effectively by the RE subject leader, who delivers high quality training to ensure the highest of standards. Pupils' interest and enjoyment of religious education was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection. The pupils across the school are highly articulate, keen to share their knowledge and understanding with others and are confident in applying a wide variety of skills. This is coupled with good behaviour, courtesy and respect that is encouraged and rewarded. Evidence in books demonstrate that pupils know what to do to improve their work and are proactive in their learning. Pupils are inspired by the creative and innovative tasks which motivate and encourage their best efforts. Pupils of all faiths and none declared produce an equally high standard of work and during our observations in 'Islam Week' pupils were proud to celebrate the traditions of their peers.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

Teaching is creative and actively engages pupils in their learning. Teachers use a variety of well-judged teaching strategies to match pupils' learning needs. All teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils. They plan and teach lessons that are engaging and challenging. Strong subject knowledge and skilled questioning ensures that all pupils explain their answers and think deeply about their learning, thus extending their ability to reflect on the deeper significance of their religious belief and practice. Marking and feedback is a strength of the school. There is consistent evidence in books of teachers using increasingly challenging questions to move pupils learning on and of pupils self-evaluating their learning. Pupils respond to 'next steps' marking using the feedback to extend their religious knowledge and understanding. The RE subject leader and leadership team monitor regularly and robustly, ensuring the very good teaching standards are maintained and the pupils make good progress. The RE subject leader provides specific meeting time for staff to jointly review and develop teaching plans which has led to increased quality of teaching. Collaborative planning and use of resources provides for that extra confidence that teachers bring to their lessons. Pupils are encouraged to work both independently and collaboratively. A notable example was during 'Spirituality Week' when Year 1 and Year 6 pupils worked together on ideas to make the world a better place. The ideas which they came up with were outlined on displays round the school. The week of teaching on Islam was thoroughly and accurately planned and age appropriate concepts were introduced. A strength of the teaching lay in challenging the pupils to understand the concepts where possible with insight and empathy.

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

The care and creativity demonstrated in focusing on ensuring religious education is taught effectively to the pupils is outstanding. The headteacher and RE coordinator have built up an ethos in the school of high quality lessons which both look to material in hand and the pupil context in which they are to be taught. Pupils thrive in their learning in religious education as a result of the framework of encouragement and delight in their progress which the school leadership has established. The vision of the senior leadership that RE is at the core of the curriculum and is to be excellently served in all respects is evident. There is a culture of self-evaluation and it is evident that it leads to change and improvement. The tracking and monitoring of RE preparation, classroom teaching and pupil book scrutinies are fully embedded in the half termly cycles. Staff are very well supported at all times and continuous professional development is regularly provided. New staff receive thorough induction into both the Catholic ethos and the RE curriculum. The governors receive regular reports on religious education at their meetings, benefitting from the insights of both the parish priest governor and shadow link governor. They are very supportive of the drive to sustain the teaching of religious education at the highest level.

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

- The school should continue to develop and promote AT2 (Learning from Religion), encouraging the pupils to deeper reflection and self-evaluation.
- The school should ensure that appropriate differentiation is in place for all, allowing for depth of challenge across the full ability range.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous report encouraged the school to develop opportunities for prayer in the course of the day including the lunchtime prayer experience and this has been carried forward very well. The morning rosary prayer group in May and October are welcome embodiments of further opportunities for prayer. The report also suggested that more teachers gain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education (CCRS) to develop their subject knowledge and this is ongoing.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is at the heart of the school's teaching and life. It constitutes at least 10% of classroom teaching time and fully conforms to the expectations of the Bishops' Conference regarding the RECD. The school's Catholic identity is very well portrayed by the religious displays round the school. Every classroom has a prayer table and a RE working wall which reflects what the children are being taught in RE and celebrates their work. The framed art work from the 'Spirituality Week' held earlier in the year was particularly notable when one moved round the school. The school's mission statement 'One Community; Love of learning; Making time for God' picks up well on the school's name 'Our Lady of Muswell'. The pupils took delight in pointing this out as they explained what being a Catholic school meant to them in meetings with the inspectors. The governors place the highest importance on the Catholic values being at work in all their planning and deliberations. They offer outstanding support to the headteacher and senior leadership team in all matters pertaining to improving and maintaining the Catholic life of the school.

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

is outstanding

The provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is outstanding. From the minute the children start in the Nursery they encounter a rich Catholic tradition of prayer and worship. Masses, liturgies and celebrations are carefully planned to enable pupils to actively prepare and lead worship. The pupils interviewed were articulate in describing their involvement in these acts of worship and their pride in the fact that their school is 'one community focused on prayer'. The parents described how 'the school is centred around genuine values where our children have the opportunity to flourish.' Inspiring activities involved in 'Spirituality Week' allowed for creative reflection and spiritual development expressed through dance and art. The school excels in offering daily opportunities for pupils to pray and reflect. The rosary group held every morning before school in May enable children, parents and governors to join together in prayer. The strong school/parish links ensure that the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation are paramount within the school's Catholic life. An annual visit from a theatre group enables creative and effective links to their relationships programme within the Catholic context.

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

is outstanding

Catholic Social Teaching is a very important and visible aspect of the curriculum provided at Our Lady of Muswell. Pupils are taught that being a Catholic means living a life that looks to the needs of others, especially the poor. The school has made very careful plans to introduce one aspect a month of Catholic Social Teaching to help the pupils consider, absorb and live out the values that teaching of Christ provides. The very diversity of the community in the school gives very many opportunities to teach these values through for example the school's 'International Week', its 'Spirituality' and

'Welcome' weeks, Black History month. The school is outstanding in the planning and delivery of these events and weeks. Year 5 achieved a special borough commendation for the work they did on Oliver Tambo (South African anti-apartheid politician) and will be visiting the Houses of Parliament with their MP. Another initiative was to launch the Mini-Vinnies two years ago and the group has come up with effective ideas for making the world and the school a better and fairer place. The school has established very good links with a number of charities and provides opportunities for them to come and work with the pupils to explain their work in the world and reinforce the money raising efforts the school and the parents are all involved. These charities include charities are Cafod, St Vincent de Paul and London Catholic Worker. Pupils are taught that working for the Common Good involves taking on responsibilities and duties; the school ensures that pupils taking up roles in groups such as the school council and the Mini-Vinnies understand that are learning about being citizens of the future. The pupils are articulate in their understanding that the variety of works for the Common Good arise from the teaching of Jesus, that they are to love their neighbour as themselves.

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 prides itself on the effectiveness of its efforts to build community with the parents, the parish, the local community and the diocese. The 'One Community' aspect is a core element in its mission statement and it has succeeded very well in enabling a close and tangible partnership between parents, school and parish. The organisation of events, liturgies and special occasions have led to parents and carers indicating they feel valued and welcomed by the school. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school both for formal liturgies and informal occasions while the school provides members of the choir and altar servers in the parish. The school is involved in local moderation and promotes the Year 6 leavers' Mass for Catholic schools in the borough. It works closely with its RE adviser and shares its experience and expertise with schools learning about the RE programme that it uses. The pupils regularly attend diocesan services in Westminster Cathedral. The school's website is effective and up to date and reinforces communication with the parents.

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

is outstanding

The headteacher, the senior leadership team and the governing body are outstandingly effective in their leadership and management of Our Lady of Muswell as Catholic school. They focus at their meetings and regularly evaluate how well the Catholic life of the school is being maintained and developed. They have developed a clear vision of how the school lives its life as a Catholic school, through its curriculum, its worship and prayer, its care for the poor, its community building and have communicated it very effectively to all. Pupils spoke with pride of the Catholic life of their school and their contribution towards it. Respectful pupil behaviour and courtesy is a very notable characteristic of the school. New staff receive active induction into the ethos of the school and there is a unity of purpose which underpins the effective leadership. The school reaches out with questions and opportunities for feedback so there is a good communication loop. The governors are both supportive and challenging, always with a view to building up the school as a good example of a Christian community.

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

- Continue to promote teachers undertaking the CCRS.
- Involve the pupils more in looking for further charities to support.
- Increase awareness of the school's foundation and history.

Information about this school

- The school is a 2 form entry Catholic Primary school in the locality of Muswell Hill.
- The school serves the parish of Our Lady of Muswell.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 74%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 14 % and from other faiths is 6%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith (6%)
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 54%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 1.
- There are 13% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 7 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. (50%)
- There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. 52 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (13%).

Department for Education Number	3093500
Unique Reference Number	102142
Local Authority	Haringey

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	386 plus nursery
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Marco Franchi
Headteacher	Mrs Angela McNicholas
Telephone number	02084446894
Website	http://www.ourladymuswell.haringey.sch.uk/
Email address	office@ourladymuswell.haringey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25th April 2013
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Good
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 fifteen lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one 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 Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Deacon Anthony Clark	Lead Inspector
Mrs Deirdre Finan	Associate Inspector
Mrs Yvonne Rutherford	Associate Inspector

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