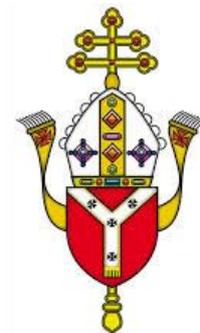


# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report



## St Aloysius Catholic Infant School

28 Phoenix Road, Camden, London NW1 1TA

29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade 1**

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy is outstanding. This is because the committed leadership of the headteacher who is also the subject leader has ensured that religious education is at the heart of the curriculum and is very well funded through resources, time and staffing. The regular cycle of moderation, class observations, scrutiny of work and progress through levels of attainment indicate outstanding effectiveness across all phases. Senior leaders are excellent role models for all staff and very good support of new teachers has led to outstanding pupil progress. Leaders at all levels have ensured that the curriculum captures the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong which has led to confident delivery and engaging lessons. By the end of Year 2 pupils' religious literacy is of a high standard and they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. The experienced governing body provides a good balance of challenge and support and is active in the life of the school.

### 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 overall effectiveness in this area is outstanding. The commitment of school leadership including the governing body to the school's Catholic identity is evident in all aspects of its work. Catholic faith is at the centre of the whole school curriculum overview and strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' experiences of sacramental celebrations, appropriate to their age. The fullness of the Catholic faith and way of life is presented through the teachings and traditions of the Church in a way which engages pupils. Prayer and worship are central to all that the school does and the commitment to social justice and the Common Good is understood by pupils. Relationships and behaviour are excellent within the school and pupils enjoy helping to serve the school and wider community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and express great appreciation of the way they are supported and their children's faith life is nurtured.

## 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, visited seven lessons, two acts of collective worship and carried out seven interviews 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.

The Inspection of St Aloysius Catholic Infant School, Camden 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 Pamela Brannigan	Lead Inspector
Mr Daniel Keane	Associate Inspector

## Description of School

This Voluntary Aided infant school is two form entry with nursery in the LA of Camden and the locality of Somers Town. The school serves the parishes of St Aloysius, Somers Town, and the neighbouring parish of St Anne's. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 56%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 21% and from other Faiths 17%. The percentage of pupils who have no faith background is 6%. The proportion of Catholic teachers in the school is 64%.

There are 196 pupils on roll, with 1 pupil with a statement of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHC). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is also well above average. There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals. Seventy five pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number:	202 3401
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Headteacher:	Mrs Jackie Cox
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Margaret Moran

Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
Previous Inspection grades:	1

<b>Key for inspection grades:</b>	<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?**

There were two areas for development in the last inspection. The first was to plan more practical and creative tasks to inspire and motivate the children. The school now ensures that drama and artistic activities are a feature of many lessons with plenty of opportunities for discussion to develop vocabulary and understanding. The second was to implement the planned development of religious education assessment by concentrating on moderation of attainment target levelling. A programme of internal and external moderation has been put in place which has led to staff having a good understanding of expectations at various levels. In addition, a good level of investment in high quality resources and more effective use of teaching assistants have led to very good lessons where all groups of pupils make rapid progress.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The content of classroom religious education across Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. By following the Composite Model introduced for The Year of Faith, the school is providing a systematic study of the areas in the Curriculum Directory. Lessons include a wide range of rich and varied activities which encourage enthusiasm and interest among pupils. In planning, the school maps out how the various topics covered match the Curriculum Directory. Religious education is presented in a variety of imaginative ways and pupils are aware of how their new learning is based on what has gone before. Resources are very well used to make sure all opportunities for learning are met. The local parish priest acts as an additional learning resource through assemblies and classroom visits. All staff have high expectations and there is a clear and shared vision of the importance of promoting religious literacy among pupils. New staff are provided with a high level of support throughout each section of the programme to make sure that they are secure in their teaching.

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

#### **Grade 1**

Pupils' attainment and progress is outstanding. From a low starting point and a high percentage of pupils unfamiliar with Catholic practice, excellent provision in the nursery gets pupils off to a flying start. Over time there is evidence of rapid progress measured by internal and external monitoring and moderation which shows that pupils attain at least the same levels as in other core subjects. Internal tracking shows large numbers of pupils make more than expected progress over both key stages and also indicates that achievement is very good for all groups including those with significant additional needs. Moderation takes place frequently at school, deanery and diocesan levels to ensure accuracy. In class, pupils' responses and work demonstrate excellent subject knowledge appropriate to their age and are able to relate learning to their own lives. Current data shows that this outstanding attainment and progress is likely to be sustained.

This outstanding achievement is made possible because the headteacher has put in place a carefully planned programme of continuous professional development over recent years which has led to a

culture of high expectations from all the staff. This is demonstrated in the tasks set within each lesson and the good questioning which encourages all pupils to express their answers using the correct religious language and vocabulary. Needs are identified quickly and intervention programmes put in place. Most teaching staff model a high level of religious literacy themselves and give pupils time for discussion and reflection. Pupils' interest and enjoyment of religious education was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 2**

Overall the quality of teaching is judged to be good with many outstanding features. Teaching seen across the school during the inspection was good or outstanding and this is in line with the school's own judgement. In both key stages practical activities and well scaffolded tasks keep children highly motivated and engaged. Throughout the school it is clear that staff expectations are high and pupils are keen to participate and respond. Teachers and support staff demonstrate good subject knowledge and the impact on pupils' progress is evident in their books and the lessons observed. Planning is systematic and detailed to take account of pupils' earlier learning. Teachers give good feedback to pupils both orally and through marking in their workbooks. Regular assessments at the end of topics allow teachers to keep a careful track on progress. Staff are currently trialling ways of gathering evidence for achievement of Attainment target 2. Support staff are well deployed and make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. Pupils are able to make links with the life of Christ and people who follow him. During the inspection, Year 1 and 2 pupils were learning about their class saints: St Martin de Porres, St. Margaret, St. Bakhita and St. Maximilian. The children were able to talk about how the saints tried to follow Jesus. They then went on to discuss how they could follow Jesus in their own lives at home and in school.

Very good teaching in religious education results in pupils who enjoy their lessons and are able to discuss their next steps in learning with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils are fully engaged during lessons and their behaviour is excellent. Appropriate homework is set regularly and encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education**

### **Grade 1**

The leadership and management of religious education is outstanding. This is due to the commitment of the headteacher and her deputy to excellence in all areas of religious education. They have inspired staff with a creative vision for the pupils which has led to a strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the Church. The headteacher oversees the half termly schedule of monitoring which includes record keeping, work scrutiny, teaching and questioning for higher level responses as well as the evaluation of planning to inform future teaching needs. The deputy headteacher works alongside staff to model good practice and improve skills. Carefully planned in-service, support for new staff and teachers' strong subject knowledge techniques, ensure there is a very good level of challenge for the more able pupils. There is well thought out continuous professional development for teachers and other adults included in the learning process. This ensures that all staff are fully able to support pupils in religious education lessons. Joint monitoring with the junior school, to which many pupils transfer, is giving staff a good understanding of the expectation in Key Stage 2. The school leadership is fully committed to enabling staff to obtain the CCRS qualification and support them in this process. The headteacher has ensured that senior leadership is fully aware of the role of subject leader and is confident that in her absence religious education would continue to have its current focus. The detailed school improvement plan clearly identifies issues for action and evaluates current provision for religious

education. Governors are fully committed to the school and know it well. The experienced chair of governors is active in the life of the school and meets the headteacher frequently for a review of current provision and areas identified in the detailed improvement plan.

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

- Put in place in-service sessions on developing and planning opportunities for assessing Attainment Target 2.
- Continue to develop subject knowledge of religious education for all staff especially new teachers.

## **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?**

There were no key areas for development in this area identified in the last inspection report. However in recent years the school has made a number of improvements in its provision of its Catholic Life. The leadership has put in place increased support for staff to enable them to lead collective worship with confidence. Pupils have increased their knowledge of the role of the charities which the school supports. Staff and governors have used the Red Book to improve their understanding of the role of the Catholic school and the composition of the governing body is now more representative of the parent body. The 'Wednesday Word' is helping parents to support their children's faith journey. There are increased opportunities for pupils to plan and lead class worship and devotions, leading to a sense of ownership.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The school fully recognises religious education as a core subject which is given the highest priority. This is reflected in the generous staffing and budget devoted to religious education and the excellent quality of resources available to staff. Across the school at least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education which is planned, tracked and monitored with rigour. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are very well supported by the headteacher, acting as subject leader, through half termly meetings linked to the aspect of the Curriculum Directory being covered. Teachers new to Catholic schools are paired with experienced staff to enable support to be given when required. This is in addition to the school's regular continuous professional development programme and excellent support for all staff. They are also given opportunities to visit other Catholic schools to observe outstanding teaching. Staff and governors regularly attend diocesan training and recognise the importance of the Catholic faith and practice in their daily lives and relationships.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is outstanding. Headteacher, staff and pupils are creative in their planning and delivery of high quality acts of worship and the celebration of Mass. Each day begins with morning prayer in the playground for pupils, staff, parents and carers. This is led by staff and pupils and there is always an opportunity for prayers to be said for personal intentions, as well as a bible reading and reflection. All pupils are given opportunities to pray at regular times in the school day and each classroom has an attractive prayer focus and display board which reflects the liturgical year. There are special prayer areas both inside the school and in the playground which are well used by pupils. Pupils are taught to pray in different ways and are given opportunities to write their own prayers, many examples of which were seen during the inspection. During class worship and assemblies pupils are reverent, respectful and able to join in some of the traditional prayers of the Church. Masses, liturgies and celebrations are carefully planned to enable pupils to actively prepare and lead worship. Pupils participate in and support parish life by attending mass regularly together with the junior school to which many pupils

transfer in Year 3. The importance placed upon the celebrations of the liturgical year and Catholic traditions of prayer and worship results in pupils being involved, engaged and aware of their own spirituality. The crowning of Our Lady in the month of May is a major celebration for pupils, parish and families. The quality and opportunities for prayer and worship are reviewed and evaluated regularly and action taken on areas for development.

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

### **Grade 1**

The call to service is well understood by pupils and there is a strong commitment and contribution of the school community to the Common Good. Pupils are actively involved in supporting a range of charities both local and national. Conversations with pupils indicate that supporting these organisations allows them to see gospel values put into practice. The theological ideas underpinning social justice are discussed with pupils and they have a good understanding of the needs of others. Assemblies, focus weeks and work in class all contribute to pupils' understanding of local and global issues. Pupils recognise that their own actions can have a great effect for good within the world. All pupils are encouraged to develop their talents and support the school community and their contributions are celebrated through assemblies, awards and certificates. Opportunities to serve on the school council or as playground buddies are valued by pupils. The school has recently achieved the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard which recognises that the school ensures inclusion is part of all policies, practices and procedures. It has also achieved Recognition of Commitment as a 'Rights Respecting' school. An annual International Evening with the Junior school enables the whole school communities to come together for the sharing of food, dancing and a display of traditional costumes. Other faiths are well taught and pupils have a good understanding of their local community. Families value the support of the provision of a Breakfast Club which is run by the school's learning mentor as well as a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils clearly feel safe in school and said they felt valued by staff who they described as wanting them to be the best they could be. Links with other local schools are very good.

## **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 1**

The school makes every effort to maintain a strong partnership with parents and carers and works closely with them to develop a shared understanding of the mission of the school. Questionnaires indicate that parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school and appreciate the high standard of education and the support for prayer, worship and Catholic Life. One parent said, 'Since my children started this school they have become fully aware of their Catholic faith. They ask questions about religion and I am so thankful they are at this wonderful school.' Parents are also given opportunities to express their views on their children's education and the school takes these into account in its response. The school welcomes parent participation and holds regular group sessions on religious aspects requested by families. Parents spoken too appreciated the 'Wednesday Word' and 'Cath Com.' One Muslim father said how much the school helped him to help his children. Parish links are also good with pupils attending school masses at St Aloysius church on a regular basis. The parish newsletter regularly includes school events which enable parishioners to see it as a vital part of the community. The parish priest of St Aloysius who is also link governor for religious education is a frequent visitor to the school. He acts as a valuable learning resource as well as meeting the headteacher and Junior school subject leader to plan masses and liturgies. There are excellent links with the diocese which is demonstrated through participation in training for both staff

and governors with the school's adviser for religious education. Pupils attend Advent and Good Shepherd Masses in Westminster Cathedral and have very good links with other Catholic schools in the deanery. The headteacher is an associate inspector for the diocese and has supported on a number of inspections. She and her deputy regularly plan and host deanery meetings for religious education subject leaders and attend diocesan conferences.

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

### **Grade 1**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in developing and promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding in the way in which Catholicity pervades all areas of school life. The governing body includes members who have wide experience in Catholic education and fully understand their roles and responsibilities. They are well placed to be both supporting and challenging and work closely with the headteacher to ensure their clear vision of Catholic education and life is shared by the whole school community. They do this by keeping abreast of initiatives in religious education, regular meetings with the headteacher and support from the diocese through governor training and the advisory service. The annual 'Governors' Day' provides an opportunity to meet the whole school community, including parents, as well as having lunch with pupils and staff. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models who lead by example. They ensure that all staff participate fully in the religious life of the school which includes Mass, religious assemblies, religious events and class visits. Every teacher has an annual performance target linked to religious education or Catholic life. The mission statement: 'In Jesus, we learn, love and grow together' underlines all of school life and is well known by the whole community.

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

- Further develop pupils' understanding of the role of the groups and charities supported by the school.
- Continue to develop parental involvement in the life of the school.