

St Joan of Arc Catholic Primary School

Northolme Road, London. N5 2UK



Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 23 January 2020

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The content of classroom religious education fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Pupils enjoy a well-resourced curriculum, which builds systematically on prior learning.
- Pupils achieve well in religious education. Their attainment and progress are in line with that of other core subjects. They demonstrate exemplary behaviour and very positive attitudes to their learning which contribute significantly to their progress.
- Teaching throughout the school is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers know their pupils well. Relationships are very positive and these create a secure environment in which to learn.
- School leaders and governors share a common vision for religious education to be central to the daily life of the school. The enthusiasm of the religious education coordinator is a guiding force in promoting good practice and ensuring staff have access to support and training to continually improve teaching and learning.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- There is not always parity of pupil outcomes across both classes in year groups.
- Pupil responses to teacher feedback is not always sufficiently detailed to move learning forwards

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school mission statement and house values permeate life at St Joan of Arc. Pupils demonstrate these in a real and meaningful way in their daily lives.
- The school fully meets the 10% curriculum requirement set by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Religious education is at the heart of this vibrant and caring school.
- Prayer and worship are central to the mission of the school. Pupils experience a rich prayer life creating their own prayers as well as participating in the traditional prayers of the Church. They enjoy planning and delivering acts of worship for their peers.
- Creative and inspiring iconography and displays around the school enhance the learning environment and provide pupils with a constant reminder of their rich Catholic heritage.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the call to human flourishing and are rightly proud of the work to do in the service of others. Respect for others and recognition of the gifts and talents of all are firmly embedded throughout the school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the school. Partnerships between home, school and parish are very strong as are those between school, the deanery and the diocese.
- Leadership and management at all levels is relentless in promoting the Catholic ethos of the school and ensuring that pupils develop into strong individuals ready to fully integrate into the wider community. Governors enjoy a trusting yet challenging relationship with the school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

All recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. Staff moderate pupils work both within school and externally with colleagues from other local schools to ensure the accuracy of their judgements. There are opportunities for staff to moderate work from other age groups, which ensures that they are fully aware of what pupils have studied and what they will be studying in the future. Pupils can talk confidently about their work. Through the 'Pupil Action' initiative they know how well they have done and what they need to do in order to move their learning forward.

The content of classroom religious education is good

St Joan of Arc School provides its pupils with a good and varied curriculum which fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Pupils make good use of resources to enhance their learning experiences. In addition to a published scheme of work a variety of other resources are used to ensure pupils make good progress throughout their time at the school. Lessons build on previous learning to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and pupils enjoy their learning. They have opportunities to study other world faiths during their time in school and the visit from the 'Judaism for Schools' team was thoroughly enjoyed; pupils made unleavened bread, looked at the Torah and tried to read the script used in Hebrew writings.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupils achieve well in religious education. Discussions of achievement and progress at pupil progress meetings and regular monitoring ensure that their achievement in religious education is now in line with that of other core subjects. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning. They are attentive and focused and are keen to do well. Pupils take pride in their work and for the majority of pupils their books are well presented showing the high regard they have for the subject. They take on board teacher comments on how to improve their work and the responses in 'Pupil Action' show that the majority of them have thought carefully about these responses. Pupils are highly articulate and demonstrate high levels of oracy. Their religious literacy is developing very well and they use religious vocabulary with increasing confidence as they progress through the school. This was clearly evident in both written work and particularly during discussions.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching throughout the school is never less than good with some examples of very strong practice. Where teaching is strongest, teachers ask demanding thought-provoking questions to test and develop pupils' understanding and they have very high expectations. Teachers now need to ensure that there is always parity of outcomes for pupils within year groups and the strong practice is shared across the school. Lessons build on prior learning and teachers plan collaboratively with colleagues to continually develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers ensure that their judgements are accurate by moderating samples of anonymised work with colleagues both within school and from other local schools. Relationships are highly positive and built on mutual respect clearly living out the school mission statement. Pupils have access to a variety of learning opportunities, for example, drama, art, poetry and ICT, to enhance their enjoyment of religious education. During the inspection, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the local parish church. Pupils in Year 3 enjoyed looking at a variety of artwork depicting the Annunciation and finding the similarities between them despite being painted over a long time span. Pupils in Year 4 were similarly engrossed in reading and discussing St Paul's letter to the Romans and trying to decide which was the most important message in the letter.

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

School leaders share and communicate a common vision for religious education to be at the heart of this warm, vibrant caring school. The headteacher and religious education coordinator ensure the religious education is central to the daily life of St Joan of Arc school and that all staff are dedicated to continually improving teaching and consequently the learning experiences of all the children in their care. The religious education coordinator's enthusiasm for and dedication to the teaching of religious education ensures that all staff are given the support they need in their role as classroom teachers. He is a guiding force in promoting and sharing good practice and developing confidence in staff. This has resulted in eleven members of staff being successful in obtaining the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Governors enjoy a trusting, yet challenging, relationship with the school community.

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

- Ensure parity of pupil outcomes across both classes in each year group.
- Ensure that all pupil responses to teacher feedback is well developed and consequently has a positive impact on moving their learning forwards.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

Recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. The school has ensured that newly appointed staff are given the opportunity to obtain the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Currently eleven members of staff have successfully completed the training and obtained their certificate. New staff also participate in induction days prior to taking up their appointments, dedicated to the promotion of Catholic Life.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is at the heart of the school and receives its full entitlement of 10% of curriculum as directed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Religious education is well resourced and the generous budget allocation is added testimony of the importance leaders place on the subject. Warm, welcoming classroom environments further demonstrate the high status of religious education. In the entrance foyer, the beautiful mosaic of St Joan of Arc and the house banners of Dom Remy, Fleur de Lis, Rouen and Benedict welcome visitors to the school. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and their houses and strive to demonstrate the Christian values of respect, love, service and courage in their daily lives; the beautiful house banners are a constant reminder for them. Further vibrant creative displays around the site demonstrate the school's commitment to the Common Good and sharing the talents of the children for all.

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

is outstanding

Worship and prayer are central to the life of all at St Joan of Arc. The school excels in offering its pupils daily opportunities for prayer and worship. Prayer holds a very special place in the school and pupils enjoy creating their own prayers and well as participating in the traditional prayers of the church. Classroom prayer areas and classroom Acts of Worship are testimony to the importance pupils place on prayer. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 showed their empathy with the people of Australia who are coping with the bush fires, through a well-planned act of worship and spontaneous prayers. Pupils' engagement in the planning, preparation and delivery of worship and prayer is an integral part of their commitment to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils have many opportunities to celebrate their rich Catholic traditions and to develop their spiritual relationship with God. Throughout the year, the school celebrates feast days, holy days of obligation, Masses for the beginning and end of term and Year 6 leavers' Mass as well as many other activities both in school and in the local parish church. During Lent, pupils have the opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the religious education coordinator leads a rosary group. Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their re-enactment of the Passion of Our Lord when they were in Year 5 and it was clear from workbooks that the younger children had loved their visit to the Living Nativity at London Zoo.

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

is outstanding

Pupils are rightly proud of their commitment to serving others. This can be clearly seen in the large numbers of pupils who applied to serve the school as 'Mini Vinnies'. Pupils have a real appreciation of the uniqueness of each person. This helps them to develop a real understanding of the call to human flourishing and the theology underpinning this. They report that 'We're all human beings but some people are unlucky and we need to support them.' Pupils are recognised and rewarded for

being living examples of the school's values and for sharing their gifts and talents for the benefit of all. Pupils actively engage in supporting the wider community – visiting the elderly in residential care homes as well as organising a variety of fund raising events for local and national charities such as the NSPCC, Cafod and the Catholic Children's Society. Pupils also realise that they can support those less fortunate by giving up their time to support children with special needs.

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 enjoys very strong links with parents. During the inspection, inspectors spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day and looked at the results of parental questionnaires. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic life of the school and school leaders. Parents comment that St Joan of Arc is a 'fantastic Catholic School, we feel very fortunate that our daughter can attend' and 'I couldn't be happier with the Catholic life of the school.' Parents are kept well informed about their child's religious education via the termly newsletters outlining the areas which will be studied and suggesting ways parents can support them at home. Strong links with the local parish are firmly embedded. The parish priest is a member of the school governing body and is a frequent and welcome visitor to school. He joins the children in class as well as celebrating Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation with them. Pupils visit the parish church regularly to join parishioners at various times throughout the liturgical year. During the inspection, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were thoroughly enjoying their visit to the church to learn about symbols and artefacts. They further enjoyed sharing their experiences with the inspection team. The school community enjoys a strong relationship with the diocese taking full advantage of training events and attending conferences to develop their knowledge and skills. The highly experienced headteacher attends the Diocese of Westminster annual headteachers' conference and has been invited to support newly appointed headteachers in their role.

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

is outstanding

The school mission statement 'The members of the community of St Joan of Arc School, by respecting each other, learn and grow in the love of Christ and the values of Love, Service, Courage and Respect, are shared by all'. The headteacher and her senior colleagues act as positive role models to ensure that the school is a vibrant, engaging and caring community. They are forward thinking, always striving to reflect on and develop current practice to secure the best outcomes for its pupils. School leaders are excellent witnesses to the values and ethos of the school and this is clearly reflected in the outstanding attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. The enthusiasm of the religious education coordinator ensures that newly appointed and non-Catholic staff are well supported so that they can fully contribute to the rich Catholic life of the school. Governors are proactive in supporting guiding and challenging the school. They visit the school regularly and know the school well.

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

- To further enhance the role of 'pupil voice' in the Catholic life of the school.

Information about this school

- The school is a two form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Highbury
- The school serves the parishes of St Joan of Arc, Highbury, St Thomas More, Manor House and Our Lady of Good Counsel, Stoke Newington.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 90%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 7%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 75%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 12.
- There are 15% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 8 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is 57%
- The percentage of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 27%.
- There are 20% of families claiming free school meals.

Department for Education Number	2063631
Unique Reference Number	100449
Local Authority	Islington

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	442 (inc Nursery)
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Adrian Fish
Headteacher	Ms Clare Campbell
Telephone number	020 7226 3920
Website	www.stjoanofarc.islington.sch.uk
Email address	office@stjoanofarc.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2015
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 12 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 1 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 Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Angela Podmore

Ms Patricia O'Donnell

Mrs Geraldine Pears

Lead Inspector

Associate Inspector

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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