



# St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Clifton Road, Kenton, Harrow HA3 9NS

Date of inspection: 19 November, 2014

## A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I\***

The religious education provision at this school is outstanding. The highly creative and rich range of curriculum strategies engages all pupils according to their needs and levels of ability. Evidence shows how progress is measured against the levels of attainment and the agreed understandings and how these are used to inform future planning and to set challenging targets. Pupils are actively engaged and highly motivated in their learning. The teachers ensure that the planning includes a clearly defined focus to empower the pupils as independent learners. The more able pupils are provided with opportunities to reach to the higher levels of attainment. Secure and robust systems of monitoring, including the performance management targets for staff, are embedded and regularly monitored by the Governing Body. The strong understanding and appreciation of the centrality of religious education in the mission of the Church, is woven through all aspects of the leadership in the school. The self-evaluation document is accurate in its portrayal of the current stage of progress and development in religious education to enable the school to sustain their very high expectations and outcomes. The excellent leadership of religious education is being well developed by the interim leader, with effective support from the senior leadership team.

## 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 Catholic life of this school is outstanding. The school fully meets the 10% requirement from the Bishops' Conference. The Governing Body is most effective in supporting and guiding the place of religious education in the school. This includes the robust and rigorous reviews of the action points within the school development plan. Prayer and worship is central to all aspects of the worship and prayer life of the school. The school is fully inclusive, reflected in their Inclusion Quality mark, (IQM), where the governors proudly acknowledge that 'the school's diversity is part of its richness'. The effective and triple partnership of home, school and parish, is significant and permeates the school's ethos and mission. The parents who met with the inspectors were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The Headteacher and his leadership team provide excellent models of good practice. They inspire and influence all dimensions of the school, as an active, prayerful Catholic community, dedicated to serve all in their community, with energy and commitment.

## 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 fourteen lessons and an assembly, and carried out seven 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 St. Bernadette's, Harrow, 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. Tina Cleugh  
Mrs Ann Staunton  
Mr. Daniel Keane

Lead Inspector  
Associate Inspector  
Associate Inspector

## Description of School

The school is a two form entry in the LA of Harrow and the locality of Kenton. The school serves the parish of All Saints, Kenton. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 88%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2.3% and from other Faiths 9.7%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 95%.

There are 425 pupils on roll, with 9 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average, 73.1%. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average, 41.5%. There is a below average rate of families claiming free school meals. 41 pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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Headteacher: Mr. David O'Farrell  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Pamela Singh

Date of previous inspection: 20 May 2009

## Key for inspection grades:

<i>Grade 1*</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Very Good</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?**

The school has met the areas identified from the previous inspection, in particular the target setting process in religious education. The pupils are gaining ownership of their targets and know what to do to improve further. A range of in-service, including external professionals in religious education, has been provided. This has empowered the staff to become more confident and deepen their knowledge of the Diocesan framework, including the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The school has accurately identified its 'next steps' in all aspects of religious education.

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

**Grade I\***

The school fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. They ensure they map out the links, including how they support and complement the Way the Truth and the Life scheme. This includes the composite IREP plans which have been used as a supplement for the last two years, and the 'Caritas in Action' social justice teaching programme. Through the combination of these resources, pupils are empowered to develop their thinking skills, whilst further improving their religious literacy. The excellent leadership provided by the substantial and interim leaders of religious education, has ensured the direct links are embedded in the four areas of the Curriculum Directory, Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. This is evident in all year group planning frameworks and all other aspects of the provision. This is also evident in the effective link within scripture and the movement through the liturgical cycle, including some in-depth study of the role of Mary in the Church. The effective use of ICT by pupils and staff, including the relevant and effective use of power point presentations, are built into the planning. These links are enhancing the breadth and creativity of the curriculum, carefully mapped out, within the short and medium term planning.

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

**Grade I\***

The school has a robust and rigorous system of tracking progress through the levels of attainment and the agreed understandings. This is clear from the evidence gathered during the inspection. They have evidence of an improving trend over the past three years, where pupils make effective progress, and in many cases, rapid progress. This included pupils reaching the higher levels by the end of each key phase. The data presented to the inspectors shows clearly how pupils, from a low starting point in early years, have made rapid and in many cases accelerated progress by the end of the key stages. In other cases, for more able pupils, the higher levels of attainment are secure. They are inspired by the creative and innovative tasks which motivate and encourage their best efforts to achieve effectively. During lesson observations, discussions with the pupils provided evidence of how they know and understand their targets, with one example, of 'my teacher asks me questions and sometimes I have to think really hard about the answer'. There were many examples of the higher levels being achieved in religious literacy. This applies from progress made by the end of early years, through key stage one, to the end of key stage two. The school has identified the 'next steps' in action points to be sustained for ongoing and consistent provision in religious education, for all pupils. The pupils clearly demonstrated a 'thirst for learning'. Moderation is undertaken twice yearly as a whole staff. There are also planned moderation sessions within year groups at the end of topics, and within deanery and diocesan networks. The school is proud of its Inclusion Quality Mark, (IQM) acknowledging their inclusive approach. This includes the very effective delivery and

progress and attainment of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those entitled to pupil premium in religious education, some of which was presented as 'case studies'. Pupils are encouraged to constantly reflect on their targets in their religious education books. They take great pride in the presentation of their work. The school has just introduced a 'Catholic Glossary Booklet' for pupils to refer to and thus continue to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade I\***

Through all of the observations carried out during the inspection, there was evidence of outstanding practice. The outstanding lessons demonstrated evidence of how teachers effectively move pupils on in their learning, through a range of planned, high order and challenging questions. Teachers know and understand the different ability levels of their pupils, ensuring that those pupils with significant and, in some cases very high levels of need, were given the appropriate levelled tasks. These pupils were also very ably assisted and guided by experienced support assistants. The tasks were effectively matched to their needs. The more able pupils were provided with 'challenge' tasks, with which they were clearly familiar enabling them to develop and improve their growing independent learning skills. There is a rich range of religious vocabulary linked to ongoing learning in all classes and in the public areas of the school. Pupils worked collaboratively, with planned and effective use of 'talking partners'. They were provided with a range of creative and imaginative strategies, such as in one lesson on the 'Trinity.' Pupils were well engaged and enjoying their learning, where one pupil said, 'I enjoy my lessons because we are learning to understand mysteries.' This included links to our traditional prayers, symbols and rituals, such as the Sign of the Cross and the Glory be to the Father. Pupils were introduced to the concept of 'mystery' through a scientific introduction on 'frozen water into evaporation and condensation', as an introduction to the mystery of the Trinity. Teachers plan relevant homework tasks, which can also be opportunities for pupils to extend their learning; some examples are where pupils developed ICT power point presentations or created 3D models, linked to the topic being explored. Much use of biblical texts was observed in many lessons. They provided quality opportunities for pupils to make the links between the Old and New Testament, for example, the key message of Jesus, (as told by St. Matthew), that 'we love one another,' and their understanding of the ten commandments. The high quality and consistency of the marking process is excellent. Teachers engage with pupils, including guiding them through higher levels of learning and challenge. During the observations pupils were eager and highly motivated to answer the well planned questions, some of which were challenging and underpinning the theology behind the content being explored.

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

### **Grade I\***

Excellent systems and structures ensure that outstanding leadership and management of religious education is sustained. An example of this is how the interim leader of religious education is very effectively covering the maternity leave of the substantial leader, in partnership with the SMT. Teachers understand the ongoing assessment for learning techniques, which informs their pupils of their 'next steps' in learning. This includes the challenge for more able pupils, which has been developed through well thought out and professionally planned continuing professional development, for all teachers and other adults in the learning process. This complements the range of Diocesan and deanery moderation and in-service. Performance Management targets for religious education and the Catholic life of the school are overseen by the Governing Body, through their termly monitoring and review processes. Staff benefit from ready access to a range of Diocesan and Catholic publications, including the 'Red Book' and the 'Religious Education Curriculum Directory,' on display in all classes and copies of 'Youcat,' from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Constant reference to these documents enables staff, through the leadership of religious education, to keep abreast of the requirements for highly effective delivery of religious education. The Governing Body

and the SMT are fully committed to all teachers attending and achieving the CCRS accreditation, by the end of this academic year

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

- School to continue developing its newly introduced electronic target setting process, to sustain the high levels of learning for all pupils of all abilities over time.

## **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 school has fully met all of the areas identified from the last inspection. The tracking and target setting system is fully in place. This impacts on the effective rates of progress for all pupils across their varying levels of ability and needs, measured against the levels of attainment in religious education. Staff continue to benefit from a range of high level Catholic professional CPD and the sharing of the leadership role in religious education. The school is the recipient of many nationally accredited awards, including their Comenius links, Sustainable Travel, Active Sports Mark, Inclusion Quality Mark, RRSA, (the Rights Respecting School Award).

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

#### **Grade I\***

The school fully meets the 10% requirement of the Bishops' Conference. The governing body is fully committed to sustaining outstanding provision. This includes their ongoing commitment to generous allocation of funding to both religious education and the catholic life of the school. The attractive and stimulating learning environment, evident both inside and in the outdoor areas, offers a range of stimulating, creative facilities and provision. This includes how effectively the school has further developed the natural environment including their 'growing' and garden areas. The pupils, guiding the inspectors on the learning walk were most proud of their school and all that it provides for the benefit of everyone in the school community. The excellent commitment by the governing body ensures the ongoing professional development of all staff. The governors who met the inspectors portrayed how they are fully committed to supporting and empowering all staff to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of religious education and the catholic life of the school. This is worthy of note.

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

#### **Grade I\***

From the moment one enters the school site, with the stained glass window of 'welcome', to the prayerful displays of St. Bernadette meeting our Blessed Lady in Lourdes, one feels instinctively that one is in a very prayerful and Catholic place. The powerful range of banners and art creations are highly visible. They encapsulate the range of catholic, Christian and other faith explorations experienced by pupils from across the age range. Pupils benefit from their opportunities as leaders in their school, especially the older pupils who lead worship, including developing their liturgical understanding through their roles as 'pupil chaplains.' This includes the support and modelling they provide to younger pupils across the school. The assembly observed was well led by the 'Chaplaincy' group. They were confident and articulate in portraying the life and example of St. Martin de Tours, the founder of Chaplaincies. Pupils outlined the impact of their election to this prestigious post in the school and their role as chaplains during their interview with the inspectors. The 'House System' is linked to their four Saints, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Martin de Porres, St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Robert Southworth. These saints' feast days are celebrated by the pupils in their 'houses,' including being allowed to attend school in their own clothes, in the dedicated colours assigned to the saints. The gifted and talented art group have created beautiful banners depicting the Saints, painted in their designated 'colours.' These hang proudly in the main hall of the school. The

Parish Priest and members of his catechist team are fully committed to supporting and developing the spiritual growth of the pupils in full and active partnership with the school. He welcomes year groups to participate in the Parish Mass weekly, on a termly rota basis for all junior pupils. Early years and key stage one pupils benefit from a range of liturgies, including participation in whole school special Mass celebrations. Periods for quiet reflection and contemplation are planned into religious education lessons. Pupils also have ready access to the 'Chaplaincy Room' and the 'Memories Garden,' dedicated to past pupils and staff who have died. The pupils across the age range who guided the inspectors on the learning walk, spoke both poignantly and with great pride of their opportunities for personal reflection and prayer. The planned Penitential Services, through Advent and Lent, include pupils' ideas and participation. These are attended by parents. The 'Wow Books,' the 'Worry' and 'Praise' boxes, situated close to the 'Chaplaincy Room,' are regularly used by the pupils across the age range. Their annual presentation from the 'Ten Ten' theatre group enables effective links to their relationships programme within the catholic context. These sessions include the parental workshops, widening the experience and partnership between the school and the parents. The annual pilgrimage to Lourdes for all staff, on a selection rota and personal needs basis, accompanying identified pupils of particular need, has grown over many years. This is part of their vital link to their patron, St. Bernadette.

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

#### **Grade 1\***

All pupils from the earliest ages are actively encouraged and engaged in their commitment to supporting and raising funds for a wide range of catholic and secular charities, locally, nationally and internationally. They fully understand their purpose and role in recognising the importance of social justice and the need and responsibility for 'human flourishing,' for all in our world. During one of the lessons observed, a pupil quoted St. Matthew's reference to Jesus' message, "whatever you do unto others you do unto me." There were examples during the inspection of how the pupils were exploring the importance of justice and how we can challenge injustice, here and in our world. Through the evidence base explored, there were many excellent examples of how the pupils are growing in their understanding of the theological background which underpins the teachings of the Church in social justice. An example during one of the lessons, is where pupils were reflecting on the scripture from Matthew regarding hunger in our world. Pupils' responses included writing their letter to their local MP about food waste, which was linked with the message from Pope Francis that, 'we all should become a little poorer'. The school fully embraces this opportunity of developing pupils' understanding of social justice, including their recent introduction of the 'Caritas in Action' programme and their ongoing links through the work of CAFOD. Their reflection on 'God has no hands but yours, so we are the ones who can make change,' was a most inspiring way for these older pupils to reflect on their role as stewards, with responsibility in creation and to seek justice for all in our world. Their operation of a 'School Food Bank' brings home directly the importance of looking after others in their local and wider community. The 'One World' week, held twice yearly, focuses on the teaching and learning of other faiths, which includes visits to places of worship and invited guests to lead assemblies and workshops in the school. The school's link to Comenius provides opportunities for staff to visit European countries and learn about their education systems and cultures. This is yet another example of the growing awareness of different levels of justice around our world. The school's award as a 'Rights Respecting School', from Unicef, is endorsed throughout the public areas of the school with their 'Articles,' which are linked to relevant Gospel passages. During the discussion with some parents it was acknowledged that the pupils leave the school with 'a strong moral compass.' This was evident in the exemplary behaviour throughout the day of the inspection. The pupils were confident, courteous and most caring in dealing with adults and supporting younger pupils.

**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\***

The school is proud of its connection locally and through the wider diocesan community. The school is an integral part of the parish life and community spirit. Governors spoke of the way the partnerships are highly valued, and recently described, 'we come together both in times of joy and more recently in sorrow'. This includes their sharing of their Chaplaincy programme, which is being expanded into other schools in the Diocese. The school is a 'Knowledge Centre' for SEN and Sports and members of the 'Canons Cluster' a local network of schools, providing school to school support. There was a highly significant response to the questionnaire, (56%), recording that parents fully agree with the school's provision for their children. These responses included anecdotal examples, such as, 'my child enjoys all aspects of the school and especially religious education', and 'teaching impacts on the whole person, 'St. Bernadette's is a brilliant Catholic school'. The Headteacher is described by parents, 'as the key outstanding role model', who with his effective and dynamic guidance from the governing body, continues to ensure the highest of standards and expectations are sustained. Another parent described how 'I couldn't have asked for a better support for my child in my child's faith'. Parents described how 'the school has helped me spiritually and that the Holy Spirit to me is evident in this school'. The school is intrinsically involved with Diocesan and local partnerships, networks. They are held in high regard by both the Diocese and the local Authority.

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

**Grade I\***

The leadership and management of this school is outstanding. The creative and dynamic vision and mission is demonstrated by the Headteacher and his leadership team. They empower all in the community to live out their mission statement of, 'we aim for excellence in all we think do and say, using the gifts God has given to us, to reach our spiritual, academic and physical potential.' The governing body is confident in its ongoing vision and aspiration, for the school to continue as a model of excellence within the Diocese and the local community.

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

- The school is introducing their Catholic Glossary Booklet, to support both the religious education and catholic life links, within the day to day life of the school, which should now be developed across the school, at appropriate age and ability levels.