

# Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

## St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School

Clifden Road, Twickenham, London, TW1 4LT  
Date of inspection: 9-10 March 2016



### A. Classroom Religious Education

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

**Overall Grade I**

Pupils at St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School are provided for excellently through the very rich religious education curriculum. They are encouraged to 'see the good things of the Lord' in their academic work as much as in the Catholic life of the whole school. They respond enthusiastically to the work in lessons which is very well informed by the Curriculum Directory and enhanced by imaginative resources of all kinds as well as vibrant and typically outstanding teaching. Attainment in religious education is excellent and rates of progress are fast. Checks on pupils' learning and moderation of their work have been built into the cycle of the school year. Marking is very regular although the consistency of the quality is not yet fully in place. Feedback to pupils is always generous in its praise but not all staff are fully skilled in providing the best possible guidance to help pupils advance their learning. The head teacher, senior staff and governors give high priority to religious education and support the department very well in its outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The link governor for religious education, other governors, and many members of the clergy, are actively involved in supporting the school in developing the pupils' religious literacy. In discussion, governors demonstrated a very thorough understanding of the next steps for the school in classroom religious education.

### 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 effectiveness of the leadership team and governing body is outstanding in actively promoting the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school. All share a clear vision for its future contribution to Catholic education within the local authority and diocese. Religious education is clearly at the centre of the curriculum and has a tangible impact upon the whole school community helping staff and pupils to frame their lives through their faith and the Catholic tradition. The experience of Catholic worship is outstanding with numerous opportunities for communal and individual prayer. Pupils clearly put their faith into action and live the call to human flourishing for all especially those most in need. Pupils actively live the schools motto to 'see the good things of the Lord' and to love their neighbour as themselves. The link between the high school and primary school is a powerful tool in fostering the Common Good and call to service in this distinctive Catholic community. Governors work determinedly to ensure that the pupils experience a vibrant Catholic ethos and spiritual life. Partnerships with parents, the surrounding parishes, with the Dioceses of Westminster and Southwark are very strong. Self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders and staff are always ready to respond where there are areas for improvement.



## **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 not been previously inspected.

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

#### **Grade 1**

The curriculum is well referenced to the Curriculum Directory and to the diocesan attainment targets. Progression is built carefully into the schemes of work to match the stage and learning of the pupils. Work is very well matched to the pupils' needs. Pupils from Year 1 make a study of other faiths, including Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Programmes of study are underpinned solidly by excellent attention to the liturgical year. Creative resources and visits supplement the pupils' experiences. From the earliest years, pupils are immersed in the scriptures, key topic vocabulary is developed and a range of practical activities reinforces pupils' developing understanding of the Catholic faith and doctrine. The prayer tables are a very effective aid to helping pupils understand the liturgical cycle. The school is working very effectively in promoting the pupils' religious literacy, particularly in developing their oral communication skills to express their beliefs and understanding of the Christian narrative and implications for daily living. Pupils' use of religious language is better developed in their oral work than in their written work generally although there are examples of extended projects providing very well for the most able pupils.

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

#### **Grade 1**

Pupils of all ages learn exceptionally well at St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School. The academic work of the school's patron saint provides a role model for the classroom work of the pupils and is well understood by all. The school's mission statement, 'to see the good things of the Lord' permeates learning as well as the attitudes and conduct of the staff and pupils. As a result, pupils of the school take great pride and care in their work in religious education. In lessons, pupils make rapid progress in their learning and develop resilience and independence. Characteristic of the achievement of all pupils is the outstandingly articulate way in which they express their understanding of the work in hand. Orally, their religious literacy is second-to-none. Moderation of work at all levels, both internal and external, is built into the school's assessment cycle. Special religious education books demonstrate the children's pride in their work and the high expectations of the staff. Evidence from work in lessons, from displays, and from discussions confirms the excellent spiritual, moral and theological development of the youngest children. They are learning very well not only about religion but also from religion. Children's work is assessed regularly through oral work, observation, discussion, photographic records and written work. Currently, children's written responses are less strong than their oral communication but are in line with their achievements in literacy. Children use religious language confidently and demonstrate a thirst for learning, participating very actively in all activities in lessons.

## **The quality of teaching**

### **Grade 1**

At St. Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School, a major strength of teaching is the warm working relationship between staff and pupils and between pupils. Religious education staff provides excellent role models for the pupils, demonstrating perseverance, resilience, diligence, creativity and a deep loyalty to the school and to the Church. Typically, teaching in Reception is outstanding. Teaching challenges children to be the best that they can be through stimulating and creative approaches to concepts and ideas. High expectations by all staff ensure that pupils develop very well in their religious literacy. Resources are excellent and range from scripture through digital aids to traditional religious artefacts. Similarly, the range of assessment strategies deployed by staff range from the simple 'show me the facial expression you would expect from the father in the parable of the prodigal son' to sophisticated recorded information on children's progress. Despite these excellent approaches, there is some variation in the feedback guidance to pupils from marked work at both phases. The best practice provides excellent guidance to pupils on how to improve but there is scope to improve the attention to spelling, and grammar in their written work.

The excellent progress that pupils make in lessons was well demonstrated in the reception classroom where children grew in their understanding of the Easter narrative through the imaginative approaches to the news in daily life, both good and bad. Meticulous organisation made for very smooth transitions between activities as did the good use of support staff.

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

### **Grade 1**

The quality of the leadership and management of the department is outstanding. Not only does the subject leader model excellent practice, but she has very well inducted staff relatively new to teaching into the department. Nothing less than the best will do and staff respond very well to these expectations. The religious education leader has a deep understanding that the task of the department is at the heart of the mission of the Church. Schemes of work have been very carefully developed and are growing in line with the growth of the school and the needs of the pupils. There are regular opportunities for the many very able pupils to extend their learning through the interesting visits and drop down days.

Very effective systems and structures are in place to regularly monitor, track and ensure the pupils make rapid progress in religious literacy. The subject leaders' impact on developing the quality of teaching is very effective overall; however it is patchy in the primary school. There is a clear recognition of where improvements are needed and helpful training opportunities are provided regularly. Self-evaluation is accurate and the drive to improve further is relentless, not least in preparing the primary phase development into Key Stage 2.

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

- Ensure consistency in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils so that it always matches the best practice.
- Make sure that pupils' written work always matches the high levels of their oral communication.

## **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 not been inspected previously.

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

#### **Grade I**

Religious Education is clearly at the centre of the curriculum for St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School and has a very significant impact upon the whole school community, helping staff and pupils to frame their lives through their faith. Working across the College, the department is staffed with three full-time subject specialists and is ably supported by the two vice principals who are also qualified religious education specialists. The subject leader is a member of the learning development team, placing religious education at the heart of the school's drive to establish excellent teaching. The department offers outstanding and creative lessons for pupils, employing a variety of strategies to engage and inspire. The "big help and little help" initiative is a key tool in raising pupils' confidence to respond to key tasks, and in the relentless drive to improve religious literacy. The school has a well-planned professional development programme and a collaborative approach to sharing best practice. With the benefit of a new school with generous timetabling, there is built-in time for teachers to reflect upon their professional development and practice. The school has a strong induction programme in place for new staff and for those new to teaching. A buddy system ensures that all staff feel welcomed and incorporated into the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school. The religious education department is well resourced. There is a designated link governor who is a regular visitor to the school. The subject leader attends all diocesan training and has developed strong working relationships with a number of local Catholic schools and St Mary's University. The school complies with the Bishops' Conference requirement of 10% taught curriculum time. At Key Stage I and in the early years, 10% of curriculum time is given over to religious education. Resources are excellent. Staff are ably supported by the subject leader and other senior leaders. Religious education permeates every area of the curriculum, laying excellent foundations for the youngest in the school community.

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

#### **Grade I**

The experience of Catholic worship in the life of the St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School is outstanding with numerous opportunities for community and individual prayer. Pupils contribute well to the planning and delivery of worship through their liturgy representatives. The appointment of an additional music teacher has seen music increase in the liturgical life of the school. One pupil described the school as being 'like a large family.' Pupils were very articulate in expressing the joy they felt about being members of this school community, speaking with real pride. The school prayer book, prayer tables and celebration assemblies all support and strengthen this sense of belonging and family. Assembly practice in the primary phases, however, is less well tuned to the needs of the children than that in the secondary school.

The celebration of the Mass is at the very heart of the school's life with local priests willingly visiting the school to celebrate the liturgy each week. Each week a form group plans and contributes to the celebration of the Eucharist. Ash Wednesday and the annual Feast of St Richard Reynolds underpin the school's liturgical calendar. Pupils play an active part in preparing for each of these celebrations

through their participation as members of the school Chamber Choir, as readers and as altar servers. Pupils greatly appreciate the care that goes into each of these celebrations and spoke readily of the way they are encouraged and challenged to live and experience the Catholic tradition. The infant phase children proudly explained that they also “helped the priest get the table ready” at the offertory. At present no children in the primary phase have made their First Holy Communion but all are encouraged to fully participate in the celebration of Mass through their listening, singing and joining in prayer and by reverently making the Sign of the Cross.

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

### **Grade I**

Pupils at St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School take seriously the gospel call to justice and service for all. Pupils actively live the school’s motto to ‘see the good things of the Lord’ and strive to love their neighbour as themselves. The link between the high school and the primary school is a powerful tool in fostering the Common Good in the hearts and minds of the community of learners. Pupils spoke of the range of inter-house competitions that exist within the school, fostering team work and healthy competition. In Lent 2015, pupils raised over £3,000 for ‘Toilet Twinning’ and throughout the school there are photographs of the communities the pupils helped to furnish with these services, allowing children to stay healthy and attend school in developing countries. Throughout the school, pupils feel safe and valued. Differences are respected. Little ones, during the inspection, enjoyed a pyjama day to raise awareness and funds for the school’s Lenten Charity. All children regardless of background are encouraged to listen respectfully to those around them. Young children are also represented on the school council and have good relationships with the older 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**

St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School is outstanding in the strong relationships it enjoys with parents and local parishes. The school has an excellent relationship with the diocese, deanery and local parishes. The governing body has an above average number of clergy within its membership and local clergy readily support the liturgical life of the school by their willingness to visit the children and to celebrate Mass. Throughout its short history the school has welcomed a number of auxiliary Bishops and the Episcopal vicar to the schools to celebrate Mass and to bless and open new buildings. The very existence of the school is framed by the sheer determination of these local parishes and parents to create a Catholic school within the area. The joyful fulfilment of this hope was beautifully illustrated in the Opening Mass in 2013 celebrated by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop Peter Smith of Southwark and Archbishop George Stack of Cardiff, together with a large number of local clergy, parishioners and families.

Priests spoke with enthusiasm of the ongoing partnership with its feeder parishes. As well as the headteacher visiting the parishes, it was also acknowledged that the chair of governors also visits feeder parishes to strengthen ties with the local faith communities from which the school community is drawn. The religious education newsletter regularly informs parents about the Catholic life of the school and the topics and activities to be explored. This is also greatly enhanced through the use of the religious education twitter account and the accessibility of staff to parents and pupils.

The school also enjoys a strong working relationship with the local parish of St James. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school to talk to the children and to celebrate Mass. Staff at all levels benefit from diocesan training and the College has also been greatly supported by the visit of advisors of the Education Service in Westminster. There is an extremely active Friends of St Richard

Reynolds association, which provides a source of fundraising but more importantly also serves to nurture and develop the extended school family. Parents are clearly respected as the primary educators of their children. Teachers seek to support them in this vocation through regular newsletters, information on the website and the sharing of the Wednesday Word. This relationship begins even before the children enter the school with home visits by the reception team. Parents and children start the academic year with a Mass of welcome. There is excellent communication between home and school via the home-school book. Parents' evenings, social events and curriculum evenings all enable the home- school partnership to be celebrated and enhanced.

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

### **Grade 1**

The effectiveness of the senior leadership team and governing body is outstanding in actively promoting the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school. They all share a clear vision for its future contribution to Catholic education within the diocese. The members of the senior leadership team witness to their faith through their consistent support of the weekly Mass, their contributions in collective worship and by providing time for staff to pause and reflect upon the nature of prayer. The understanding of prayer being a natural accompaniment and outpouring of our Catholic faith permeates the life of the school, be it a staff meeting, gathering of governors or the time for saying grace before lunch for pupils.

The senior leadership team has worked tirelessly to ensure the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school, clear from the moment of its inception. This critical self-review encourages all the members of the teaching staff to feel confident in sharing their own faith story and to actively embrace the Catholic ethos of the school. The school's induction programme for both staff and pupils seeks to nurture the spiritual and pastoral values of the community where all can live school's motto *Videte Bona Domini*, "See the good things of the Lord". This is further developed through staff training and staff meetings throughout the academic year with opportunities to reflect upon the Catholic life of the school and each person's faith journey as a natural and ongoing personal review. Middle leaders, as part of the schools ongoing appraisal process, are set a target which develops out of their own reflection upon their individual contribution to the Catholic life of the school.

The governors' involvement in the life of the school is outstanding. Each member is actively involved in the day- to- day life of the school. All middle leaders regularly attend governors' meetings to share their vision and their future plans for their curriculum areas. The link governor for religious education is a regular visitor to the department. Such regular contact and support allows governors to be fully conversant with the present strengths and the weaknesses of the school and to support the staff in developing the Catholic life of the school. Several members of staff have been commissioned as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist for service within the College community.

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

- Continue to share the best practice in terms of worship and assemblies so that there is greater consistency of experience between the school phases.