



# Diocese of Westminster

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## St Charles Catholic Primary School

83 St Charles Square. London W10 6EB

Telephone: 02089695566

e-mail address: [info@st-charles.rbkc.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-charles.rbkc.sch.uk)

DFE Number: 207 5201

URN Number: 100505

Headteacher: Miss A. Slavin

Chair of Governors: Mrs P. Chambers

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Date of previous inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts

## Introduction

The inspector would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspector spent one day in school, visited 9 lessons and 2 acts of collective worship, and carried out 3 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, examination of school documents, and attendance at religious services where possible.

The Inspection of St Charles Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by 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.

## Description of School

The school is a 1.5 form entry in the LA of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the locality of Ladbroke Grove. The school serves the parishes of Ladbroke Grove, Kensal Green and East Acton. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 94%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 5% and from other Faiths 1%.

There are 337 pupils on roll, with 10 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is just over 50%. There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.

### Key for inspection grades.

*Grade 1\*: Outstanding;*

*Grade 1: Very Good;*

*Grade 2: Good;*

*Grade 3: Requires improvement;*

*Grade 4: Causing Concern.*

## **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?*

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

**Grade [2]**

Staff meetings have been held to examine the revised Curriculum Directory and each teacher has their own copy for immediate reference. Teachers plan their topics using the objectives of the revised Curriculum Directory. They ensure aspects from all four areas are covered and highlight which are being taught in each lesson. They use the “Here I Am” programme of study with additional teaching linked to Saints and the “Year of Faith”. The RE subject leader is closely monitoring the coverage of the new Curriculum Directory objectives and has begun to determine where extra teaching is needed so that all objectives are taught during each Key Stage. The school has recognised in its self-evaluation the need to continue to ensure the new elements of the Directory are known thoroughly and fully embedded within the curriculum. Learning and resources are made relevant to the ages and abilities of the pupils as evidenced by the younger children using drama to re-enact a Baptism with suitable props. Other religious teaching is enhanced well, using visits and visitors.

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

**Grade [2]**

Pupils are gaining an understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and the traditions of the Catholic Church at a good rate of progress. They display a growing depth of thought which impacts very well on their spiritual and moral development. During a year 6 lesson, pupils described with maturely expressed thoughts, how they had used a gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives and what would have happened if they had not used the gift. Pupils achieve age appropriate levels of attainment. The school has sought extensive training from the diocesan advisor focused on developing teaching to challenge all pupils, and especially the more able, to achieve their full potential. The impact of this training is becoming evident by the fact that teachers now have higher expectations of pupils, and current assessment levels of pupil outcomes are rising. To ensure accuracy of judgements teachers moderate the assessments recording their criteria. Pupils RE books are well presented and evidence a full curriculum coverage with a good range of written activities.

### **The quality of teaching**

**Grade [2]**

Teaching is good overall and some very good aspects were observed. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives and success criteria, these enabling pupils to effectively assess their own learning. Teachers use visual material, open questions, and development of pupils’ own ideas effectively to engage their interest. Meditation sessions are used very effectively to focus pupils’ thoughts on the learning, such as preceding a lesson on Baptism by a reflection on water. Scripture is used well to develop learning as was shown when a passage from Matthew’s gospel introduced pupils to examining how they could be a “Child of the Light”. Marking is, on the whole, thorough, with appropriate praise and added suggestions, but rarely do pupils have the opportunity to improve their work.

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

**Grade [1]**

The leadership of religious education (RE) is very good and well supported by the headteacher and RE governor. The deputy headteacher, as religious education subject leader, has a clear, enthusiastic vision for the subject and guides and supports staff very well. Evaluations are accurate and effective in identifying areas for development. All teachers have a performance management target linked to religious education, these being monitored by the senior leadership. The leadership supports and enables training, when monitoring shows there is a need. For example, when the monitoring of RE data revealed only a few pupils reached Level 5 attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, the school organised training, led by a diocesan advisor, focused on raising all teachers' expectations for higher standards and particularly on improving their planning to challenge more able pupils to achieve a higher level. The impact of this is being closely monitored and evidence shows outcome standards are being raised. The RE governor is in frequent discussion with the RE subject leader and reviews regularly the progress of the planned improvement actions and their impact. Eleven teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS). Despite staffing disruptions recently, RE has maintained a very high profile, both in terms of its staff meeting time relative to other subjects, and the extensive individual guidance given to temporary staff from the school leadership team.

### **What has improved in curriculum religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in curriculum religious education?**

The improvement action point from the last inspection has been fully achieved. RE assessments are linked to National Levels of Attainment and pupil progress is tracked and monitored.

To further improve classroom religious education the school has identified a need to further develop RE marking by giving pupils opportunities to make suggested improvements to their work and to continue to monitor planning and assessments to ensure full coverage of the revised Curriculum Directory.

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

**Overall Grade: [2]**

The inspector concurs with the school's self-evaluation judgement. Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a good rate and the standards achieved are rising. Pupils are becoming aware of how faith affects their daily living. They enjoy their religious education lessons especially when given practical activities to express their ideas such as in drama, and ICT (information and communication technology). All staff are committed to the high profile given to religious education.

## **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?*

### **The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum - time, resources, budget**

**Grade [1\*]**

Religious education is very important in the school evidenced by the subject receiving at least 10% of curriculum time, by its high budget relative to other core subjects, by its centrality in the themes for class assemblies, by its priority in the whole school development plan and by the leadership of the subject undertaken by the deputy headteacher. Pupils are aware that it is central to school and say "What we learn in RE affects our whole lives".

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

**Grade [1]**

Worship, prayer and reflection opportunities are integral parts of each school day and make a strong impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils' liturgical formation is very well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship, and reflect well the Church's year. Pupils are respectful during worship and participate with sincerity. The high quality of singing and pupil instrument playing, powerfully enriches their experience. Pupils are actively involved in leading liturgies and the year 4 pupils are enthusiastically beginning to plan their own class collective worship. During the inspection, a group of Year 4 pupils devised and led a very moving interactive collective worship and afterwards suggested possible future improvements. This excellent initiative is at a very early stage of implementation. The school plans to extend this practice to other year groups with many more pupils preparing school liturgies by themselves. The older pupils attend Mass and the younger children have a suitable liturgy on feast days. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the sacramental life of the school.

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

**Grade [1]**

Pupils are very aware of the importance of service to others. Pupils and families give generously to many diverse charities both locally, nationally and globally. Through discussions with pupils, formally and informally during the inspection, it was very evident that the older pupils had a very good understanding of the reasons why they do good and give to others and explained "it is what Jesus and the Saints would have done". Younger pupils, however, were unable to link this clearly to their RE learning. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and enthusiastically undertake a variety of responsibilities. The school provides many extra curriculum activities to develop pupils' talents such as the very high standard of orchestra and choir. The choir regularly performs to the local elderly and sick. The school demonstrates respect for other cultures and invites contributions from parents. Relationships within the school community are very good. Pupils appreciate the friendliness of staff who make lessons fun and help with problems. Pupils' opinions of some whole school issues are sought through the school council and the feasible ideas have been put into action. However, the issues discussed with pupils have not included any evaluations linked to aspects of religious education, worship and the Catholic life of the school. Pupils' pastoral and language needs are supported effectively. This contributes very well to pupils' confidence and well-being. Pupils describe the school as "a big, happy family".

**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 works in partnership with the Diocese and pupils and staff attend diocesan and deanery events. The school is enthusiastically working with diocesan staff to trial new worship materials. The school has very good links with parents who are actively supportive. This was shown by the very positive replies from the parental questionnaire. Sending “Wednesday Word” weekly newsletter home is a recent initiative and encourages parents and their children to read scripture together and reflect on its messages. The school plans to sustain this development and continue using this resource as a valuable method of encouraging the growth of the partnership of home and school based on the child’s faith development. The school has effective links with the parish and uses the church to enrich RE learning with pupils visiting there to learn about Baptism from the parish priest and to become familiar with relevant artefacts.

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

**Grade [1\*]**

The school leaders are powerfully committed to the Church’s mission in education and to providing for pupils’ individual needs. They have a clear vision and mission statement and engage all staff and pupils in fulfilling this. The Catholic identity of the school is pivotal to school life and this is evidenced by the many high quality displays and the enrichment of pupils’ experiences, for example, the focused retreat for the older pupils. The school provides Catholic life training for staff and all staff have a performance management target linked to the school’s Catholicity. The Year of Faith is strongly represented in pupils’ work and activities. The rose garden and outdoor chapel magnificently enrich outdoor prayer and worship. The leadership understands very well the school’s strengths and development needs, through their thorough and accurate self-evaluation. Governors are supportive and well informed about the work of the school.

**What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school ?**

The development issue from the last inspection has been fully achieved.

To further develop the school’s Catholic life the school should:

Embed the current practice of pupils’ planning, preparing and leading their class collective worship.

Develop monitoring to include pupils’ evaluations of worship, RE and Catholic life.

**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]**

This school is a very good school with outstanding features. The school provides pupils with a very rich experience of the Catholic way of living and believing. This is reflected in pupils’ good behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils say “we are all trying to live Jesus’ message”. Prayer and worship have a strong central role in school life. The dedicated leadership of the headteacher and RE subject leader is instrumental in very effectively maintaining and developing the Catholic identity.