

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

299, Westferry Road, Millwall, E14 3RS

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 28 June 2019



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- The headteacher leads the school by personal example and is tireless in her desire to provide the best possible education for the children in her care. She is a highly visible presence to parents and children at the start and end of the day.
- The head has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has rigorous action plans to address any areas for development.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate.
- The school has a core curriculum that it follows. However opportunities to develop pupils' creative skills in religious education are being missed in both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teaching about other faiths is a strength of this school. Pupils are being taught in a deep way about other faiths such as Judaism, Sikhism and Islam.
- The quality of teaching is mostly good and the school has identified areas for further improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in class and in lessons are outstanding and behaviour and engagement are strong in this school.
- Religious literacy and vocabulary are good in all key stages

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- The school needs to improve the quality of teaching in religious education to ensure all teaching and learning is at least good and matches the standards in other core subjects.
- Leaders need to ensure consistency in assessment procedures across the school and reduce the marking workload for teachers.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher and governors in promoting the Catholic life of the school are judged to be outstanding.
- School leaders have much to be proud of in the Catholic life they have developed in this school.
- Prayer and worship are central to the Catholic life of the school. This is a major and distinctive strength of this school. The celebration of the Eucharist and other sacramental celebrations are offered at key times of the liturgical year.
- There are weekly class Masses in the nearby parish church. Pupil participation in the planning of and contribution to Masses is of a high standard.
- Pupils show a good understanding of serving others and clearly understand their responsibilities towards others both locally and internationally. Pupils are aware of the theology underpinning our contribution to the Common Good but this is not yet securely understood.
- Parents express great support and gratitude to the school as evidenced by high number of responses to a survey and a questionnaire. Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the the headteacher in particular.
- Links with the parish and diocese are outstanding and the partnerships have greatly evolved since the previous inspection.
- The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding. The school mission statement, 'Through Christ we learn', is known by all pupils and is at the heart of this school.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has shown significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school has provided extensive training opportunities for all staff and continuing professional development is encouraged by the headteacher. The school has worked extensively on its marking policy and some of the older pupils are now responding to teacher's comments. The school has correctly identified that marking is now too onerous for teachers and is wisely reviewing this next year.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of religious education (RE) curriculum at St Edmund's meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* (RECD). The curriculum is planned for by the subject leaders of RE. The school has one main core curriculum that it follows over the year. The curriculum is planned by the RE leadership team. There is evidence to show creativity in the teaching and learning of RE in some classes. However, opportunities to develop pupils' creative skills in RE are being missed in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching about other faiths are a strength of this school. Pupils are being taught in a deep way about other faiths such as Judaism, Sikhism and Islam. The liturgical year and calendar is being closely matched to pupils' learning. The curriculum gives pupils a good opportunity to learn about many aspects of their Catholic faith.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Standards of pupil achievement have risen this year and are broadly comparable with standards in the core subjects. Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities but are overall below the national average. They leave at the end of Key Stage 2 with levels that are broadly matching the national average, therefore progress is judged to be good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They quickly acquire age appropriate religious vocabulary and learn the names of Jesus and Mary and other key figures in the Bible. Nursery children were learning about the Virtues and words such as grateful and patient and how to apply these in their young lives. Reception children were learning about the Virtues shown by the Good Samaritan such as kindness and forgiveness. The early years teaching space is an attractive setting inside and outside and is well resourced. In Key Stage 1 the pupils were beginning to learn about the Cardinal Virtues and teaching was well matched to pupils' abilities. In Key Stage 2 pupils were learning in much greater depth about the Cardinal Virtues and in some classes learning in greater depth what such words as prudence, restraint and justice meant and how they could be applied in daily lives. Religious literacy and vocabulary are good. Pupils are gaining strong knowledge and understanding of the Sacraments especially the Eucharist. They are also learning and writing at length about the Gospel of Luke. Pupils' attitudes to learning in class are outstanding and behaviour is a strong in this school. Religious literacy and vocabulary are good. The best work is seen around the teaching of other faiths - Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. Pupils spoken with told inspectors how much they enjoyed this aspect of their learning. The work seen in books in this area is of a high standard and also allows some creativity in ICT folders. Writing is extensive but opportunities to exercise their creative talents are limited.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching is mostly good and the school has identified areas for improvement. The headteacher is ambitious for her school and has high expectations of all her staff. She knows where teaching needs to improve and is determined to achieve this. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) pupils are being very well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and all support staff. The school is fully inclusive. Pupils are engaged in lessons and eager to discuss their

learning with visitors. Assessment procedures are inaccurate in many classes across the school. A scrutiny of books showed that pupils were being assessed far higher than work merited. This needs to be addressed as a whole school issue. The school has worked on its marking policy and teachers are applying this in many RE lessons. Older pupils do have the chance to respond to teachers marking and further improve their work. The school's policy is not being consistently applied and has increased workload for teachers. The school is reviewing this area next year. Homework is provided and parents are eager to support their children's learning in RE.

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

The leadership and management of RE are good. The headteacher leads the school by personal example and is tireless in her desire to provide the best possible education for the children in her care. She is being supported by an RE leadership team of three leaders. This means that no individual is responsible for overall standards and areas of responsibility. This area of leadership and management needs to be reviewed to ensure accountability. Training and professional development for staff is plentiful and is available to all staff including support staff. The governing body is being well led by a committed chair and the parish priest also plays a key role in the work of the governing body. The school's own self-evaluation is highly accurate and the headteacher in particular is very honest and open in her assessment of the school.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in RE to ensure all teaching and learning is at least good and matches the standards in other core subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills in the RE curriculum.
- Develop consistency in assessment procedures across the school and reduce the marking workload for teachers.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The only area for development in the previous inspection report has been fully addressed. Links with the local parish are highly developed and are now judged to be a strength of the school.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

There is 10% of curriculum time devoted to RE in every class, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This is clearly timetabled and is central to the life of the school. Not all timetables seen are being adhered to and the school needs to monitor this. Displays around the school are well presented and the Catholicity of the school is celebrated. An appropriate budget is allocated every year and the subject is well resourced especially with Bibles to further the study of scripture.

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

is outstanding

Prayer and worship are central to the Catholic life of the school. This is a major strength of this school. The celebration of the Eucharist and other sacramental celebrations are offered at key times of the liturgical year. There are weekly class Masses in the nearby parish church. These also take place on Holy Days and other significant occasions, throughout the year for example on feast days. Pupil participation in the planning of and contribution to Masses is high. Children deliver the Bible readings from the lectern, read the bidding prayers and have also acted out the Gospel, after the priest has read it, thus making Masses stimulating and engaging for the pupils of this school. The school choir takes an active role leading praise and worship during Masses. Class prayer books are made where pupils take ownership by writing a personalised prayer or the book is taken home to write a prayer with their family. Pupils are involved in the planning and leading of class assemblies. Where appropriate, references are also made to festivals of other faith traditions. There is also provision of quiet areas for prayer and reflection both in school and in the beautiful wildlife garden.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

is outstanding

The school is outstanding in its work to promote the Common Good over time. Pupils are actively engaged in fund-raising for a wide range of charities. Pupils show a good understanding of serving others and clearly understand their responsibilities towards others both locally and internationally. Pupils are aware of the theology underpinning our contribution to the Common Good but this is not secure and needs further development. Pupils were proud of their work in supporting local charities by the Advent appeal for 'The Passage', a Westminster homeless charity, and also of their Lenten appeal for Shelter and the PDSA. They are less sure of the work they do in raising funds for international charities that are mainly for disaster relief and are reactive. There are currently no long-term sustainable charities being supported overseas. Some pupils were able to link the Bible story of the Good Samaritan to the theology around the Common Good but more work needs to be done in this area. Leadership opportunities are extensive for pupils within this school. The highly articulate School Council takes an active part in all aspects of school life. The school provides a counselling service for children, their parents and staff through involvement with 'Place 2Be'. This service allows the users a one-to-one opportunity to speak to qualified adults about behavioural, mental health and other issues which hold back educational development, or effective parenting. Over time and typically the work around the Common Good is judged to be outstanding.

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

Parents express great support and gratitude to the school as evidenced by the 122 responses to a survey and questionnaire. This is a large response for a one-form entry primary school. Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the role of the headteacher in particular. Links with the parish are outstanding and the partnership has greatly evolved since the previous inspection. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. The school has identified the need to get more female role models involved in partnership to further develop the Catholic life of the school. The school is committed to the Diocese of Westminster and participates fully in all professional development. Staff and governors have taken part in diocesan training and shared this with other colleagues. The RE adviser is a regular visitor to the school and provides support and insight into such areas as assessment and standards. The headteacher attends all local deanery meetings and the school is linked closely to neighbouring Catholic schools and other schools in the local authority. Links with the diocese have been very close for many years and are judged to be outstanding.

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

is outstanding

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding. The school mission statement, 'Through Christ we learn', is known by all pupils and is at the heart of this school. The headteacher strives tirelessly to promote the Catholic life of the school. Self-evaluation is highly accurate and the school has devised good plans for even greater ways to promote the Catholic life of the school. The head clearly knows the strengths and areas for development in this school. There is a very strong commitment exhibited by the head, the governors and all staff to enhancing all aspects of Catholic education. Governors are very keen to see this community prosper in its overall Catholic life. The behaviour of the pupils at all times is of the highest standard and this reflects very well on the leadership and management displayed by members of staff in this school.

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

- Develop greater understanding around the theology of the Common Good.

Information about this school

- The school is a one-form entry Catholic primary school in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in the locality of Millwall.
- The school serves the parish of St Edmund's, Millwall.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 90%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 2% and from other faiths is 4 %. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 80%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 1.
- There are 66 (29%) of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 8 have statements of Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average
- There is an above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 53 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (24%).

Department for Education Number	211/3431
Unique Reference Number	100951
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	224
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Stella Oladini
Headteacher	Ms Gail O'Flaherty
Telephone number	020 7987 2546
Website	www.st-edmunds.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-edmunds.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2014
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Very 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 8 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended one 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.

Mr Sean Flood

Lead Inspector

Ms Tracey Peters

Associate Inspector

Ms Sinead Steed

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>

Vaughan House
46 Francis Street,
London
SW1P 1QN

T: 020 7798 9005
E: education@rcdow.org.uk
W: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education>