



# Diocese of Westminster

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## St Mary's School

47 Fitzjohn's Avenue, Hampstead, London NW3 6PG

Telephone: 020 7435 1868

e-mail address: [enquiries@stmh.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@stmh.co.uk)

DFE Number: 202/6084

URN Number: N/A

Headteacher: Miss Angela Rawlinson

Chair of Governors: Ms Susan McCarron

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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: 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2013

Date of previous inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mr Sean Flood

Associate Inspector: Ms Pauline Curran

## 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 1 day in the school, visited 11 lessons and assemblies or liturgies, and carried out 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 Mary's 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 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.

## Description of School

St Mary's School is a two form independent Catholic primary school for pupils between the ages of 2 and 11. It is situated in the LA of Camden and the locality of Hampstead. The school has its own beautifully appointed chapel and also serves the parish of St Thomas More, Swiss Cottage. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 68%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 12.5% and from other or no Faiths 19.5%.

There are 295 pupils on roll, with 2 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well below average but there is a high proportion of children who are bi-lingual. There are 6 families claiming free school meals and eligible for pupil premium.

There are 28 full-time and 5 part-time teachers in the school 10 of whom are Catholic and 5 of these hold the CCRS and 1 holds a higher Catholic qualification.

The school was originally founded in 1926 by the Sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary and has since been handed over to a Catholic Education Trust .

The school states that it seeks to provide an education firmly founded on Christ and the Catholic Faith and its Religious Education Policy states that:

*"Together we journey with Jesus our Lord, as one family, one spirit, one school."*

## 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?*

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

**Overall Grade: [1]**

Classroom religious education is very good overall with outstanding achievement and progress from the pupils. Standards of written work, artwork and the spoken word in religious education are very high in this school. The leadership and management of classroom religious education is also judged to be outstanding with some exciting ideas for further development.

The governing body are very committed to high standards of classroom education.

There is a rich and broad coverage of religious education in the school.

The use and implementation of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory is progressing very well. Teaching is at least good in all classes with many being judged outstanding. Pupil behaviour in lessons and right across the school is exemplary at all times. Pupils clearly enjoy their religious education lessons and are confident and articulate in expressing their ideas. The school seeks to be inclusive in all its provision. The chaplain plays a key role in ensuring a very high standard of pupil knowledge and understanding.

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

The school has made very good progress in addressing the main issue from its previous inspection. The school has developed its marking strategy to include suggestions for how pupils can further improve their work. This is ongoing, and the school now regularly uses 'next step' marking to achieve even higher levels of progress. The school has adopted a new religious education curriculum as recommended in the previous inspection.

To develop even further the school should:

- make more extensive use of its ICT equipment such as iPads and new technologies to enhance classroom provision for all ages.

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

**Grade [1\*]**

The strands of study in the Religious Education Curriculum Directory are used to very good effect in the development of a curriculum for religious education. The school is currently using the Year of Faith units of study and these are all cross-referenced with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory to ensure comprehensive coverage. There is evidence of very good and imaginative medium term planning to adapt the Religious Education Curriculum Directory to pupils' needs and outstanding individual lesson plans were also in evidence. The school also still uses the "Here I Am" programme of study for teaching about other faiths.

There is a rich and broad coverage of religious education in this school.

The use and implementation of the Curriculum Directory is progressing very well in this school and there is also evidence of forward thinking for future curriculum development.

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

**Grade [1\*]**

Achievement, attainment and progress in religious education are all outstanding in this school. Pupils are highly articulate and confident in discussions and also really enjoy their lessons as their enthusiasm is very evident. Several pupils spoken to, expressed the opinion that it was their favourite subject as it gave them time to think, reflect and develop as human beings.

Pupils' attainment on entry is above national averages and by the time they leave in year 6 their attainment is well above national averages. Progress therefore is judged to be outstanding.

Pupils respond very well to high order questioning and indeed frequently ask searching and challenging questions themselves.

Work is carefully and regularly moderated and assessed by the leadership team. The written work presented and on display around the school is of a very high order. In the early years, photographs and artwork are used very creatively to show the work young children are doing. In Year 2, pupils are writing and learning about psalms as well as learning about other faiths such as Judaism. In Year 4, pupils learn in detail about the structure of the Bible and by Year 6 the pupils are learning in great detail about antiphons and how they are constructed.

Outstanding work was seen in all years and age groups and the examples given are to illustrate the rapid and sustained progress that pupils make during their time in this school. Pupils take great pride and care in their work and are very eager to share their work with visitors.

### **The quality of teaching**

**Grade [1]**

The quality of the teaching in the school ranges from good to outstanding.

Planning in all classes is comprehensive and thorough with some outstanding individual lesson plans seen. Behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary and the enthusiasm of pupils of all ages is very evident. In the early years, provision is very good and young children get off to a very good start in learning about Jesus and his life and works. Year 2 pupils used meditation, role play, and a very active chaplain played the role of St Matthew in one very good lesson seen. In two outstanding lessons seen in Year 6, the pupils were studying in detail the structures of an Antiphon. Differentiation of teaching styles was seen during this inspection and the school is keen to ensure good and dynamic practice in every classroom. Marking is variable but some high standards of marking were seen including 'next steps' marking. This work is ongoing.

ICT was used effectively in some classes but in others, opportunities were missed to further enhance creative learning by using the newly acquired iPads.

The school strives to be inclusive in its provision and teaching assistants play a very good role in this area.

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

**Grade [1\*]**

Religious education is led and managed in an outstanding way throughout the school.

The headteacher leads by great personal commitment and dedication to providing high quality religious education. The leadership team ensures planning is well adhered to and the head is well supported by a new, enthusiastic and highly effective leader of learning in religious education. The chaplain who is present in the school for two and half days a week also greatly facilitates effective leadership and management of religious education and is always eager to help.

Governors are strongly committed to seeing high standards of Catholic education in the school.

Monitoring of teaching quality is well co-ordinated across the year and the leader of learning in religious education is eager to develop this process even further. The religious education leader gives very good support and encouragement to colleagues in the school including newly qualified teachers. Targets for pupils are clear and relevant and aid further development and new learning. Teachers have received appropriate in-service training and there are clear policy statements for all areas outlining teacher entitlement to professional development. The school has received input and guidance from the diocesan advisers in recent years. The school development plan places a high emphasis on the centrality of religious education in the curriculum. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a clear understanding of where it is at present and what needs to be developed for the future. A very generous budget is allocated to religious education every year and this is being well spent right across the school and also in the grounds and displays.

## **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 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\*]**

The overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school is judged to be outstanding in the following ways:

Religious education is at the core of the curriculum and is central to everything the school does in its daily life. The subject is very well resourced and has a high profile in the school.

Prayer and Catholic worship are a major strength of this school and take place on a daily basis in a wide variety of forms. Mass and the Eucharist are celebrated regularly in the school and chapel, and pupils play a lead role in organising and celebrating these.

Displays all over the school are of a very high standard and reflect the Catholicity of this school.

A wide range of opportunities are provided for pupils to exercise responsibility and develop their talents and contribute towards the Common Good. Parents greatly value and appreciate the way the school emphasises its Catholic life. The governing body are also fully committed to developing even further the Catholic life of the school and the leadership of the headteacher and her team in developing the richness of a Catholic way of living and being is quite outstanding.

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

There were no issues highlighted in the previous report.

To further develop the Catholic life the school needs to:

- explore and develop ways to get parents more involved in prayer, liturgy and worship within the school itself.

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

**Grade [1\*]**

10% of curriculum time is carefully planned for and devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week. Teachers have very good subject knowledge of religious education in accordance with the Religious Education Curriculum Directory for England and Wales. Other faiths, especially Judaism, are studied in appropriate detail and equally for the appropriate amount of time. The school allocates an extremely generous budget to teaching about the Catholic faith and resources are plentiful and carefully selected to cover all areas of the curriculum

The school is blessed by having its own beautifully appointed chapel on site. In-service training is carefully planned for all teachers and is effective in this school. Recent training has taken place on the Year of Faith units and assessment. Newly qualified teachers are also well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education by an enthusiastic leader of learning.

**The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community** **Grade [1\*]**

Catholic worship is outstanding in this school.

The children in the early years get a rich introduction to the prayer life of the Church. All pupils are given very good opportunities to compose their own liturgies, prayers and private intentions. The permanent chaplain plays a key role in this area and greatly helps with prayer, liturgy and worship. Assemblies provide opportunities for the children to reflect and pray in a meaningful way. The school begins and ends the day with prayers and also uses prayer at lunch times and throughout the day. The school holds a “Praying Together” service every Friday for children and parents. All classes have at least one corner set aside with seasonal liturgical colours and appropriate vocabulary. Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and the Eucharist are celebrated regularly in the school and chapel and children play a lead role in organising and celebrating these. Displays all over the school are of a very high standard indeed and some lovely prayers seen in many areas and across all ages. Prayer and Catholic worship are clearly a major strength of the school.

**The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.** **Grade [1\*]**

The religious education curriculum is fully inclusive and the pupils are very aware of the Gospel call to justice and service. The school community actively involves pupils in supporting local, national and international charities and sustainable community projects. The pupils were very proud and eager to share their recent fund raising efforts for the Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Appeal.

The children are called upon to support CAFOD and also support the Catholic Children’s Society. A wide range of charities have been supported over the years including the British Heart Foundation, Ladybrand Hospice and a long term project in Zimbabwe supporting school and orphanages. The school is fully committed to inclusion of all learners this is seen as essential to the school’s mission. A wide range of opportunities are provided across the school for pupils to exercise responsibility and develop their talents. These include a School Council, prefects, monitors a house system and Little Sister- Big Sister links to support each other in many different ways in class, playgrounds and right across the school day. Pupils talked about the fact that bullying was almost unheard of because of these highly evolved systems of support.

**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 headteacher and religious education leader of learning attend a wide variety of Diocesan conferences and training programmes. The school is keen to be more involved with Diocesan training and has hosted recent training sessions. The religious education adviser is a welcome visitor to the school. Staff and pupils from St Mary’s conduct Advent and Christmas Carol Services for parents and the wider parishes. Years 4 and 6 have class retreats at London Colney. Parents are invited to celebrate Mass, Year of Faith sessions and liturgies with the school, and are greatly encouraged to do so. The school is very eager to see greater parent participation in the religious life of the school and this is has been identified as an area for development.

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

**Grade [1\*]**

The headteacher leads the Catholic life of the school by her own personal example and leads in an outstanding manner. She is ably assisted in this task by her leader of learning and her senior leadership team. The chaplain also plays a pivotal role in the success of the Catholic life of this school. The whole school community share a strong vision of the Catholic nature of education. The governing body provide a highly effective balance of challenge and support and are very committed to developing the Catholic life of the school. The school Mission Statement reflects the fact that faith underpins all aspects of school life:

‘St. Mary’s School seeks to provide an education firmly founded on Christ and the Catholic Faith’

Staff in the school are encouraged to promote a broad and balanced curriculum with a central focus on the key features of spiritual and moral development. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good and the inclusion of all learners is a central ideal of the school. Teachers assess and are tracking pupils’ attainment in R.E. regularly to a high standard Parents are very proud of the Catholic life of the school and express great appreciation for the dedicated work of the school.





Diocese of Westminster

St Mary's School, Hampstead

Date of inspection: December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013

Reporting Inspector: Mr Sean Flood  
Associate Inspector: Mrs Pauline Curran

**Key for inspection grades:**

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*Grade 2: Good;*  
*Grade 3: Requires improvement;*  
*Grade 4: Causing Concern.*

**A. Classroom Religious Education**

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

**Overall Grade [1]**

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?	Grade [1*]
Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education	Grade [1*]
The quality of teaching	Grade [1]
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education	Grade [1*]

**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 [1\*]**

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget	Grade [1*]
The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community	Grade [1*]
The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.	Grade [1*]
The 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 effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school.	Grade [1*]