

## **Diocese of Westminster**

### **Review of Classroom Religious Education and Catholic Life of the Junior House of The London Oratory School.**



The Junior House of The London Oratory School was visited on 12 June 2019 to review classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. This was an additional visit to supplement the formal Diocesan inspection of The London Oratory School, which took place in February 2019.

#### **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 (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and (iv) as required by the school's Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. During the inspection, two lessons were observed and the inspectors attended an assembly. 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.

Lead Inspector                Mrs Angela Podmore

Associate Inspector        Ms Grace Anderson

#### **Classroom Religious Education**

School leaders ensure that religious education in the Junior House is central to the daily life of its pupils. The school environment provides an excellent atmosphere in which pupils can grow and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the demands of the religious education curriculum. The curriculum is delivered in a creative, engaging and stimulating way so that all pupils enjoy their lessons. This is demonstrated through the articulation of the pupils during the lessons observed and the responses from pupils during our meetings with them. It is clear that feedback from the previous inspection has been fully implemented into daily practice. Pupils report that the school 'is a really nice place to come to.'

Pupil achievement in religious education is excellent. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning and take great pride in their work. They enjoy their lessons and comment on the variety of ways their teacher makes lessons interesting, for example using drama, role play, art etc. Cross-curricular links with the art and English departments further enhance the pupils' engagement with their lessons. Pupils demonstrate a true commitment to their work. They fully take on board the detailed teacher feedback to improve their work. They are becoming more independent in their learning often choosing to attempt the harder 'Chilli challenges' to extend their knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through self-assessment as seen in their books. They are highly articulate and use religious vocabulary with confidence during discussions and in extended writing tasks. They can use and refer to scripture to support their ideas and conclusions. Their behaviour is excellent and is instrumental in the excellent progress they make.

Teaching in the Junior House is strong. It is creative and engages pupils with their learning. Strong subject knowledge, very positive relationships and mutual respect enhance learning experiences. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and marking and feedback provide clear and detailed guidance on what to do to improve further. Guided scaffolding in preparation for extended writing tasks ensures all pupils are given every opportunity to produce high quality pieces of work.

They thoroughly enjoyed their task 'Jesus' trial – was it fair?' They particularly enjoyed being able to argue from different points of view. Teaching consistently challenges pupil thought processes through provoking questions, building on prior learning that deepens and extends the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils speak very fondly of their religious education lessons commenting that they are 'something to look forward to'.

Leadership and management of religious education is highly proactive in striving for excellence and ensuring that it is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders have worked diligently to ensure that robust and rigorous systems are in place to track and monitor pupil progress and put systems in place to support pupils as necessary. Governors visit the school regularly, visiting classes, observing lessons and meeting the pupils, sharing in the vision for the Junior House to be a place of excellence.

### **Catholic life of the school**

The high regard and centrality of religious education can clearly be seen around the school, in classroom displays and community areas. The beautiful library area is inscribed with inspirational quotations from their Oratorian tradition and gives a clear message about the importance and high regard placed on this charism. Cross curricular initiatives with other departments ensure that religious education permeates every aspect of school life. The beautiful work inspired by the 'Passion of Christ in Art' project is testimony to this. The recent introduction of the Narnia Project in J3 has proved a very popular addition and pupils speak with great enthusiasm of their 'Turkish Delight Boxes'. The project involves the whole family and parental comments in pupils' workbooks show a deep commitment to supporting their son's personal, social and moral development.

Opportunities for pupils in the Junior House to join together for worship are excellent and permeate their life at the school, they are provided with a breadth and richness of Catholic worship and tradition. Mass is celebrated weekly and is enhanced by the wonderful singing from the Schola Cantorum. Pupils also have the opportunity to attend Mass regularly at the Brompton Oratory. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available every fortnight and is extremely well attended. Pupils pray the Rosary each week and the very popular Rosary club, led by the older pupils in Junior House, is flourishing; pupils report that 'everyone who goes to the club really wants to be there'. The beautiful chapel is at the heart of the school community and is not only used for community acts of worship but is also well used for private prayer and reflection. The headteacher and chaplain are outstanding role models in promoting the religious life of the school.

Catholic social teaching is firmly embedded throughout the Junior House and pupils develop their skills to serve one another and demonstrate compassion in a number of ways including fund raising for those less fortunate than themselves and serving others in their community as prefects, house captains and sports captains. They speak very enthusiastically about their 'Leg it for Lent' and 'Love in a Box' events, the Cafod World Gifts project and the Little Prince School project in Kenya. Pupils have a strong understanding of the call to serve others and fully appreciate the privileges they have but are highly conscious that others are not so fortunate reporting 'We have everything but not all children do.' They comment that helping others is 'a good feeling, we want to do it. We have been taught by Jesus that we need to help others. Jesus told us to love one another.' Pupils in the Schola perform in high profile concerts and liturgical services throughout the year both in school and for the wider community.

Parental questionnaires indicate the very strong relationships between home and school. They are very positive about the all-round education their children receive based solidly on the rich tradition of the Oratorian charism commenting that 'It is a school with a great heart and led by a visionary leader'. Junior House also enjoys positive relationships with the Brompton Oratory. A number of pupils sing with the Schola at Saturday Mass. The chaplain is a popular visitor to the school and pupils enjoy the opportunities he brings for them to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation and

serve Mass. The Junior House staff take advantage of the services offered by the diocese and are developing their relationships with other schools in the deanery.

The inspirational headteacher and senior leaders are all fully committed to developing the Catholic identity, vision and mission of the school. They are relentless in their determination to see that pupils are faithful witnesses and disciples to their faith. The development of catholicity is central to their thinking and their *raison d'être* and the school motto *Respice Finem* (look to the end) is understood and lived by all in the school community. Governors fully share this passion and are highly proactive in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- For the religious education coordinator to attend deanery and diocesan moderation training events.
- To further develop the liturgical life of the school by providing more opportunities of pupils to be involved in preparing, planning and leading liturgies and class worship.

#### **Information about this school**

- The Junior House is a one form entry, junior section of the The London Oratory School, a Catholic Academy in the locality of Fulham.
- The school does not serve a particular parish or local authority area and most unusually draws its pupils from across London.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 100%.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 64.2% and the percentage of Catholic form teachers is 50%.
- There are 6.25% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 32.2%.
- 3 pupils claim free school meals (3.75%).
- 4 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (5%).

Department for Education Number	205/5400
Unique Reference Number	137157
Local Authority	The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Type of school	Secondary with a Primary School
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Male
Number of pupils on roll	80
The appropriate authority	The governing body and academy trust
Chair	Mr Paul Thimont
Headteacher	Mr Daniel Wright