

Report of the Denominational (Canon 806 & Section 48)  
Inspection of  
(Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

***St Edmund's Catholic Primary School***

DfE No: 935/3311

URN: 124764

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Ms Zoe Crane

Headteacher: Mrs Maria Kemble

Denominational Inspector: Mrs Margaret Stewart

Dates of Inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Date and grade of previous inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 Grade 1

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL**

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School is close to the centre of Bury St. Edmunds and stands on the same site as St. Edmund's King and Martyr parish church. The school serves the Bury parish and surrounding parishes of Our Lady's Stowmarket, St. Mary's Thetford and St. Thomas of Canterbury, Brandon. Since the last inspection the school has increased its roll to accommodate Years 5 and 6 pupils and now has 389 pupils with 14 classes in total. Presently, leaders and governors are in consultation to assume governance of the Pre-school on site. The percentage of Catholic pupils is 73%, other Christian denominations 16.7% and 1.5% from other world faiths. 30% of pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low at 6% and there is a lower than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) at 4%. There are three pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan, with three more pupils undergoing assessment.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.**

### **Grade 1**

St. Edmund's School is an outstanding Catholic school. It lives and fulfils its Mission Statement 'Learning Together in God's Love' by encouraging and supporting one another in every aspect of school life. The highly effective and focussed Leadership from the Executive Head, Head of School and Governors is exemplary. It is clear that they are ambitious for themselves, their colleagues and the pupils alike. They are committed to working hard to ensure that everyone achieves to the best of their ability and they put supportive and robust systems in place for this to happen. The Catholic identity of the school is strong and clearly evident is the warm and positive relationships, the celebratory and welcoming environment, and the service to both local and global communities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is reflected in the pupils' attitude to learning and their behaviour both in and out of school. Pupils are proud to be members of their school - 'everyone is valued and respected' - and they feel strongly that they have a voice that is heard, - 'We must speak out if we hear about things that are unfair'. Leaders are continually striving to enhance the experience of everyone in the school community and to build a community of faith and service that reaches beyond the school boundaries.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further?**

- **To challenge older pupils –**
  - develop leadership skills further by planning and leading acts of worship for their Key Stage and the whole school.
  - sow seeds for a deeper experience of prayer life before transition to upper school by developing Exposition and Benediction as acts of worship.
- **To more fully engage and provide for a range of learners by developing greater differentiated learning opportunities in RE.**
- **Embed pupils' skills of self-reflection in their learning in RE by using 'I Can' statements at the end of each topic**
- **Work towards the Gold award in Rights Respecting Schools so that service can be offered to the community beyond the boundaries of school.**

## **CATHOLIC LIFE:**

## **Grade 1**

The community of St Edmund's school has an environment rich in Catholic traditions in which to live, learn and grow. Everyone is expected, yet supported and encouraged as people of faith, to live out their responsibilities as effective Christians. Achievement of a silver award for 'Rights Respecting Schools' (UNICEF) has impacted on all aspects of school life. It is clearly evident in the school environment that the dignity of the person is valued and celebrated. Vibrant and thoughts provoking displays, are labelled with the UNICEF rights. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to take on leadership roles and the responsibility for shaping the Catholic character of the school. They plan and lead class liturgies, contribute to events and developments as Eco and school councillors and are good role models as house captains and lunch buddies. Pupils benefit from the life of liturgy, prayer and service embedded within the life of the school. Attendance at diocesan schools and community events ensures pupils develop a deeper understanding of their Catholic traditions and a sense of pride of belonging to a cohesive community. A shared responsibility towards a wider, global family is shown in the enthusiasm for participating in events such as Share the Journey (CAFOD), Cambodian Masses and a variety of fund raising events throughout the year.

The mission statement is visible and tangible throughout all areas of life in school. The commitment of all adults to provide a caring, respectful and vibrant environment where everyone is valued, is outstanding. Staff are powerful role models for each other and the pupils in their care. The dedication shown by the teachers to develop the whole child is clearly evident in relationships in and out of the classrooms. There is clear provision for adults to develop personally and professionally through quality CPD (Continual Professional Development), support and guidance from more experienced staff and the opportunity to take on mentoring and leadership roles. There is good chaplaincy support where the whole school is welcomed to celebrate Mass throughout the liturgical year. The chaplain describes the pupils' contribution to Mass as 'uplifting'. The language of high expectation and inclusivity is used fluently across the school. The assembly observed during the inspection highlighted the 'Learning Characteristic' of being 'Resourceful'. There was a clear expectation that this would be a quality everyone would work on during the week. In addition the school was called upon to welcome new pupils into the EYFS setting and to 'show them how to be part of St Edmund's'.

The programme 'Journey in Love' is used to teach the RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) curriculum and is underpinned by clear Catholic teachings and principles. Leaders listen carefully to the informed views of parents to sensitively prepare pupils for developing age appropriate, respectful relationships throughout their lives.

School leaders and governors are committed to ensuring provision in all areas is of a very high standard. Governors are consistently supportive in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision of Catholic life in and out of school and their energy is inspiring. They feel 'honoured to be governors'. Achievement of a gold award in the Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM) demonstrates leaders' commitment to prioritising the Catholic life of the school. At governor meetings priority is given to agenda items relating to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They have a rigorous approach to evaluating the experiences provided for the pupils and are regular visitors to school, on trips and at events, providing evaluative reports for the governing body and other leaders in school to inform improvements. Leaders actively and regularly seek the views of parents and pupils to help shape and improve Catholic life in school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**

## **Grade 2**

Achievement in Religious Education (RE) is high at each key stage with many exceeding the age related standard. Where outcomes were above those for other core subjects, assessment in RE captures learning through a variety of lenses such as art, dialogue and drama. Progress between key stages was not presented but it was clear in books that pupils made good progress from their starting points at the beginning of the school year. It is evident through observations of teaching, displays and workbooks that most pupils fully engage with and enjoy their learning in RE. Many children are keen to show additional work that they are particularly proud of in their books. One child in year 2 said, 'I liked learning about the Jewish Torah, it is so precious, you are not allowed to touch it with your hands'. Pupils enjoy the challenge of exploring current issues, ethical questions and thinking philosophically, making links with previous learning - 'There are lots of things that make us wonder'. Pupils have the opportunity to work independently and co-operatively, observations of older pupils demonstrated well taught collaboration skills during a CAFOD workshop. Lessons observed where role play brought learning in RE to life evidenced the rich opportunities to connect and empathise with others. Photographs of a visit to a Gurdwara and a Mosque by KS2 pupils demonstrates their sense of awe and wonder and the bringing to life of their learning in RE about other world faiths.

All pupils can talk knowledgeably about their learning in RE showing that teachers are both skilled and enthusiastic about teaching the subject, and are supported effectively by dedicated and caring teaching assistants. A highly effective lesson with the younger children on Sikhism clearly demonstrated the teacher has excellent subject knowledge and pedagogy in engaging learners. Marking is not yet leading to improvements in RE, yet it is clear that most pupils are well challenged during their RE lessons. Pupils are asked to make links with scripture, give views about events or actions and tackle 'Big Questions'. Glossary boxes were used effectively to extend the use of specific vocabulary around the trial of Jesus. Differentiation is mostly by outcome and this could be a focus to address the needs of the range of learners in each class. Using the I Can statements, pupils were able to say that this helps them reflect on what they had been learning. There was evidence of peer assessment taking place in some books. Year 6 are trialling new I Can statements in line with the New Standards in RE which are based on Bloom's Taxonomy, presenting extra challenge for pupils and promoting high standards of religious literacy.

Governors ensure that RE meets the requirement of the Bishops' Conference in every key stage and that at least 10% of teaching time is dedicated to RE. They prioritise funding to reflect the importance of quality CPD, resourcing, staffing and enriching the experience of pupils, therefore RE has full parity with other core subjects. Leaders and governors self-evaluation and monitoring systems are robust and strategic and their findings contribute to the annual subject leader report and action plan, ensuring that outcomes for pupils and provision is of a high standard. The RE leader has a clear vision for RE. In partnership with the executive headteacher, she uses her subject knowledge and experience passionately to develop and improve RE throughout the school, ensuring that teaching and learning in RE is at least consistently good with many outstanding elements

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**

## **Grade 1**

The pupils respond prayerfully and thoughtfully to collective worship from the youngest age and understand that it is an important part of their community life. Nearly all pupils join in enthusiastically with singing and signing the school hymn that contains the words of the mission statement. The recorder group accompanied the piano and confidently described their contribution to collective worship in and out of school. All pupils enjoy the responsibility

for planning, leading and evaluating class liturgies and Masses linked to the liturgical year and school themes. A record of their planning and resources are kept proudly on their prayer table. Pupils stated that they pray often throughout the day and that it is important because it brings you closer to Jesus', - 'So many people need our prayers'. They particularly enjoy quiet prayer time 'when they can say their own prayers to God'. This was clearly evident in an EYFS class where pupils were invited to spend time in silent prayer while holding 'a flower for Jesus'. The pupils displayed a stillness and reverence while the teacher quietly brought them to a meeting with Jesus in a short reading. The parish priest provides good support to the school and is a visible presence for the whole community. He speaks highly of pupils' thoughtful and knowledgeable answers during Mass and says 'the pupils use their many talents in worship'. First Holy Communion is taught within the parish but teachers from school prepare some of the groups. A celebration in school is arranged for the communicants allowing friends to share in the joy of the sacrament.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is the core feature of every celebration throughout the school year. Evidence of celebrations and prayers fill the corridors and classrooms reflecting the liturgical year such as Pentecost and the sacrament of First Holy Communion. Each class has a well presented prayer table with examples of personal prayers written by the children, links to CAFOD and UNICEF and artwork with captions or questions, making it a focus for thoughtful prayer and contemplation. Staff demonstrate they understand that prayer has a clear purpose in the formation of the children's spiritual development, even from the youngest age. Each prayer table includes a label stating who the class wants to pray for during the week, 'Those who are troubled' 'people who are sick', 'our friends'. Pupils have a range of opportunities to experience a life of prayer beyond the school and home. They join with other diocesan schools to make a pilgrimage to Walsingham each year, contributing through music, singing and reading during Mass. A parent who attended this celebration said the 'behaviour and participation of the children was amazing'.

All adults within school are outstanding role models in respect of their deep understanding of the importance and impact of collective worship on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Collective worship is thoughtfully planned, reflecting the cycle of the liturgical seasons, feasts and celebration. Assemblies in school are varied throughout the week and are led by different members of staff. They focus on different aspects of worship, ranging from traditional to more contemporary presentations to engage the full range of age groups and learners. Governors' support and challenge of collective worship is outstanding. They attend and review collective worship regularly, seeking views from both parents and pupils then ensuring that this is reported back to other governors and leaders for action. Governors are committed to ensuring that quality CPD is available for all teachers in collective worship. Leaders attend courses and development days within the diocese and beyond.

The diocesan inspector wishes to thank the executive head of school, head of school, staff, pupils, governors and the whole school community for their very warm and friendly welcome and their valuable input into the life of St.Edmund's Catholic Primary school.



## **EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE**

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### **Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection**

25<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Dear Pupils

#### **Diocesan Inspection of St. Edmund's Catholic School**

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome I received when I came to visit your school. I enjoyed observing you working hard in your lessons, looking at the work in your RE books and seeing the colourful displays around your school and in your classrooms. I also enjoyed talking to you about life at school and to see how proud you are to belong to St.Edmund's.

Here are some of the things I especially liked

- St.Edmund's is a place where everyone practises strong Christian Catholic values and where prayer and faith are important.
- Everyone works hard to make St.Edmund's a happy and welcoming place to work and learn. Your teachers and other adults care for you very much.
- Your behaviour is excellent in and outside school and this helps you to achieve well in your learning and to develop good friendships.
- You show great service to others and that it is important to show responsibility for people in your community and in parts of the world that need extra help and care.

I have asked your teachers to consider giving older children more responsibility in planning and leading prayer for the whole school. I would also like the teachers to look at some of the activities you do in RE so that you can learn more easily and that you get more opportunities to reflect on what you have done well and what you need to learn next. I know you will work hard to help your teachers to get the gold award in Rights Respecting Schools.

Thank you again for allowing me to visit you in your school. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Name Mrs Margaret Stewart  
Diocesan Inspector