



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 118757**

**St Edward's Catholic Primary School**

**New Road**

**Sheerness**

**Kent ME12 1BW**

**Inspection date:**

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Chair of Executive Governors:**

**Mrs Chrissie Wells**

**Executive Principal:**

**Mrs Sara Wakefield**

**Inspectors:**

**Mr Stephen Beck**

**Mrs Helen Frostick**

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR

Tel 01689 829331

**Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes**



## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edward's Catholic Primary School is situated in the Chatham Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is an academy within the Kent Catholic Partnership (KCSP) Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The principal parish which the school serves is Saints Henry and Elizabeth and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Minster, Isle of Sheppey.

The school is a one-form entry primary school and takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 30%. There has been a slight increase in the number of Catholic pupils due to mobility as families have moved onto the island; the majority of the increase results from migration from Polish or other Eastern European families. In addition, several of the school's families are known to be Catholic but have not registered their children as such, as they have not been baptised or do not have the documentation. Some families feel they are no longer Catholic as they are not practicing. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The number of pupils currently on roll is 207. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally below average. The proportion of pupils who receive extra support in class is average at 20%. Most pupils are of white British and European heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) is similar to that of most primary schools at 17.8%. A high number of pupils at 38% are eligible for pupil premium funding and a high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The academy is in the highest quintile for deprivation in Kent being currently the 5th most deprived school out of 455.

St Edward's is a school that has been on a significant journey that has seen it move from an Ofsted category to its current status as a good school. The new leadership team has made an admirable start in addressing many of its historic issues. There is evidence of strong progress in many areas. Not all initiatives have had sufficient time to bed down or produce strong evidence of success, and there remains some inconsistency. At this point in time, while leadership was seen to be highly effective, and meets the criteria for outstanding, other aspects of the school's denominational work can only be judged to be good. It is commendable that this has been achieved while coping with ongoing staff changes and staffing recruitment issues. It is now in a much stronger position with a clear capacity to build on the progress that has been made.



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Edward's is a good Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. This is because both staff and pupils live out the mission statement each day. An ethos of Catholic education underpins all aspects of school life. The well-being and personal development of all pupils and staff are at the heart of this faith community. St Edward's is a welcoming community, helping pupils to develop their faith. The governing body provides a balance of challenge and support and is active in the life of the school.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good as it is central to the life of the school and all pupils, from a very young age, are respectful and reverent during worship. Pupils are developing skills in planning and leading acts of worship. Leaders and managers are strong role models and have a clear vision for how the provision of Collective Worship can improve.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education, can explain its value and are keen to do well. This leads to good progress in most lessons. Senior leaders are true role models for all staff. Leaders' effective monitoring and support of new teachers has led to teaching, which is good and sometimes outstanding. It is given high importance within the school and enables pupils to make good progress. The Executive Principal and new subject leader have put in place systems which are delivering a good quality curriculum. This is resulting in a good level of religious literacy and understanding for all groups in the school and a high level of confidence among staff.
- While core teaching is at least good and sometimes outstanding, due to the journey the school has experienced, the spectrum of staff involved in leading the delivery of Religious Education has been necessarily narrow. This is a result of considerable changes in the make-up of the staff. There is however, given the current strength of the core team, a genuine scope to extend staff involvement in the delivery of Religious Education to a broader range of teachers.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Share more widely the excellent practice identified in teaching, to build high levels of confidence in all teachers and thereby secure consistency across the school.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to actively plan and lead collective worship through increased participation in liturgies with an increasing number being celebrated with parents.
- Complete the cycle of consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupils regarding the planned revision of the school's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy in line with Diocesan guidance and statutory requirements.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	2
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### Catholic Life

	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	2
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1

### Religious Education

	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	2

### Collective Worship

	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.	2
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	2

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## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.**

- St. Edward's is a welcoming school with a clear plan and timetable of opportunities for children to develop their Catholicity.
- Most pupils value and are ambassadors of the school's mission, '*Achieve in God's love*'. They participate actively in the Catholic Life of the school and respect its Catholic tradition and links with the parish community.
- A majority of pupils show respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. Their behaviour is generally very good and they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate and celebrate each other's achievements and are praised regularly through a variety of awards.
- On the day of inspection, children commented, 'Our school is a big family'. 'We have lots of friends'.
- Pupils in general, regardless of their faith background, enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of a Catholic school entails. They accept the increased opportunities that are being developed to take on responsibilities. As a result, they offer service to the school as, for example, members of the School Council, Mini Vinnies, Rosary Group, Eco Council, Visitor Ambassadors, Restorative Justice Leaders and Science Ambassadors. They are enthusiastic about these roles and are keen to develop them further.
- Pupils at St. Edward's are growing into articulate, mature pupils with self-confidence and esteem, who have a developing understanding of the importance of their mission.
- As a parent wrote on their questionnaire, '*Since my children started at St Edward's, they have continued to grow and grow. They have the best teachers and are now always happy and excited to go to school. I could not wish for anything more for my children and school life*'.

**The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- St Edward's Catholic Primary School is a good school with growing outstanding features. It continues to develop well following a period of instability. The deep-rooted traditions and beliefs of the Catholic Faith walk hand in hand with the very good pastoral care provided. It is a welcoming, inclusive Catholic community in which every member of the school is valued and treated with dignity and respect in a culture of mutual trust.
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- Each day, pupils are given the opportunity for their 15 minutes of 'Jesus' time. One child prayed, '*Dear God, help me to follow the right path and not to follow the wrong one. Help me to love my neighbour and myself. Amen*' and commented '*I like praying in here, it is relaxing*'. A new school prayer was written in consultation with staff and children and has been said daily from January 2018



- Staff are committed to the school's mission statement and its implementation across the curriculum. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- In September 2017, leaders introduced the Bishop's Conference Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) using the 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' programme. This was to ensure coverage and rigour. Staff have grown in confidence following its introduction and are linking it to agreed age-related expectations and are increasingly able to show evidence of this in pupils' books.
- Pupils and parents of St Edward's regularly take part in local, global and national charities. These include CAFOD, Children in Need, Macmillan Coffee Morning, Cancer Research, Sport Relief, and the Hedgehog Rescue Centre as well as many others, as they are committed to helping others less fortunate than themselves.
- The Restorative Justice team help the pupils to resolve issues at lunchtime. The six core values of the school also link to the six school rules and a restorative justice approach is used to resolve conflicts by staff and students.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. These include displays, classroom focal areas and prayer spaces.
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person through its fundraising, eco stewardship and developing outreach opportunities.
- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff. Some of these are through opportunities for prayer. Staff benefit from opportunities for continuous professional development such as the subject leader's attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days.
- The school has committed to supporting Relationships and Sex Education alongside Personal, Social and Health Education and all the relevant, current documentation is in place. This is an area the school has recognised needs to be further developed to embed it fully into the curriculum across the school year and for it to be mapped out accordingly.
- As a parent wrote, *'The school has such a lovely family feel, nothing is too much trouble for the staff. The progress my child has made is amazing and he is growing in confidence daily'.*

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- Parents commented that communications between school, parish and home are excellent and agree that the school offers a distinctively Catholic education.
- St Edward's is a highly aspirational school. This is supported by exceptional leadership from the Executive Principal, Academy Co-Principals, one of whom is the Religious Education lead and member of the SLT. Their dynamism and clarity of vision for the school in partnership, with a strategic thinking Chair of Governors, and supportive parish priest serves the school well as it continues to move forward.



- The school's commitment to all aspects of Catholic life is reflected in its remarkable record of evangelisation. This is both among staff and parents and has resulted in several adults and pupils being received into the Church.
- While the school has journeyed through a difficult period, the new leadership has begun to bring the stability that the school urgently needed. Their resolute determination to see the school improve rapidly is infectious. Supported by astute Executive Governors, a new vision for the school has been articulated which reorients the school around strong Catholic values of inclusion and service. Staff, pupils and parents are buying into this new vision.
- The Catholic Life of the school is being nurtured effectively and standards in Religious Education are continuing to improve under the leadership of the Religious Education subject leader. The new school leadership has brought a compelling vision for St Edwards, which restates for all the Catholic and inclusive values of the school. Staff, parents and pupils have felt this change and are committed to this direction of travel.
- Governors and staff work together for the betterment of the school. In the last two years the links between the parish, the school and homes have grown impressively. The Executive Principal and her leadership team enjoy a supportive relationship, which is reflected across the school. Leaders are hard-working and committed. They lead by example. This drive to follow Christ's example to love one another, putting the pupils at the centre of life at St. Edward's has a definite impact on outcomes and the atmosphere in the school. It is a positive place to be.
- Parents feel that the school promotes strong partnerships. As one parent wrote, *'We would like to thank the staff team for their energy and enthusiasm in developing a very positive school, church and home relationship. Their innovation in engaging the children in Catholic Social values is excellent, giving our children many opportunities such as the Mini Vinnies and Rosary Group'.*

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.**

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good. The new scheme of work was introduced following mentoring from the Diocese. Teachers have had coaching from the Diocese to plan from the chosen programme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'.
- During lessons and interviews, pupils were articulate about both their learning in Religious Education and aspirations for themselves and the school. They said they were "...proud to be a part of St. Edward's," and that they recognised the work of the teachers in supporting them. Pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are becoming more religiously literate and engaging young people. They are beginning to use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. Pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities and respond well to tasks which extend their learning when given the opportunity.
- Pupils are generally actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to further develop as competent learners. This could be improved further by teachers and other adults using the language of the standards, for example, driver words more routinely during lessons and when questioning to challenge pupils thinking. This will support them in being able to recognise, describe, give reasons, show understanding, identify and explain the context of Religious Education topics.
- Pupils study other Faiths and religious topics. These help to promote tolerance and respect for those who have different beliefs to themselves. The first week of five of the half terms is given to the teaching of other faiths which follows a carefully developed progression across each year group. The impact of this has been evident in staff discussions around their planning, the sharing out of resources and the reduction in an overlap of content.
- The quality of pupils' current work, orally in class and written in books, is good. Presentation in books is good and pupils take pride in them.

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.**

- Religious Education is a core subject at St. Edward's alongside English and Maths. The relatively new Religious Education Policy was developed in consultation with the Diocese, Governors, staff and pupils. The Policy acts as a handbook for staff, outlining not just the 'what' but the 'why' and the 'how' of the school.
- St. Edward's has been at the forefront of the Diocesan project to collate an exemplification of standards file in Religious Education. Several pieces of their pupils work appear in the National Portfolio. In the process of working for this, St.





Edward's now has its own exemplification portfolio reflecting it taking on the new age-related expectations.

- The Religious Education Leader is a knowledgeable, enthusiastic driving force for her subject and has moved it forward significantly in a relatively short space of time, making good use of increasing cross-curricular links. She has established well organised and informative files and collated the resources for leading the area and for staff.
- Data is used to target and support individuals as well as groups of pupils. The performance of cohorts and groups is evaluated and these are monitored throughout the year. A termly report (3 times a year) is collated and discussed with KCSP, Governors and SLT at the academic challenge board meetings.
- Thought-provoking displays in corridors and classrooms explicitly value pupils' Religious Education learning. The prayer corners/focus areas are monitored termly and after training and INSET these have been significantly improved and are now better used.
- Teaching is generally strong and in some cases, outstanding. The school has a very child-centred approach that ensures Religious Education has an impact on pupils' social, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- Pupils in the early years get a good start to their education and this is particularly well reinforced in upper key stage 2.
- As a parent commented, *'This school has helped my children to achieve so much. They have always been supportive of both children and parents. We are very proud to be part of the St Edward's family'.*

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.**

- The Religious Education leader is committed to her role. Conscientious monitoring of planning, displays, book scrutiny and lesson observations inform development planning. Feedback is provided to individuals and groups. Meticulous and detailed record-keeping demonstrates her commitment to driving improvement and raising standards.
- Staff have worked with colleagues from other deanery schools to ensure standards of provision are maintained and developed further.
- The parish priest is fulsome in his praise of the St Edward's community. He makes a valuable contribution to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. He is a frequent visitor to the school supporting Religious Education, celebrating Mass and liturgies and strengthening the links between school and parish. Parish sacramental programmes are supported by the Religious Education curriculum in school. The involvement of the parish priest is valued by the school and much appreciated by parents.
- Leaders' development planning in Religious Education is clear in its objectives, the personnel involved and resource implications. The school should ensure that all success criteria are measurable and may wish to include appropriate timescales.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of Religious Education is full and reflects the priority the school gives to its Catholic Life. It is mostly summative and descriptive and should be extended to make it securely evidence-based reflecting the impact of planned



improvements and more clearly identify areas for further development. Timescales linking it to the whole school development plan will make it a more useful working document.

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Pupils' response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is good. Prayer and worship are a valued part of school life. Collective worship opportunities are varied. Pupils know that this is an integral part of school life and enjoy coming together as a worshipping community.
- On the day of inspection during the acts of worship observed, pupils gathered respectfully and joyfully to music and hymns. They listened reverently to the Word of God in Scripture and responded appropriately by reflecting quietly, (when given the opportunity), and shared their reflections in a dignified manner. The majority listened to one another attentively and went forth happily with the message they had received from the Scripture singing suitable hymns with enthusiasm.
- The school is proud of its role in the Catholic Church, parish and community; both allowing pupils and their families to develop their relationship with God, but also preparing the pupils for life with a real understanding of how to live the Gospel Values. In doing so, pupils have a stronger sense of self and resilience and are able to turn to the Church throughout their lives for support, comfort and prayer.
- Pupils are beginning to prepare and lead worship with enthusiasm and a degree of independence. They use a variety of approaches to prayer, which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer, both traditional and contemporary.
- Pupils spoke about how they enjoyed their times of worship, the times they were actively involved in it and also when they could be 'silent and calm' for example in the new after-school worship group organised by a member of the parish.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background and they are gaining in confidence to articulate their beliefs and feelings. This will stand them in good stead as they move into secondary school and beyond.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Acts of Collective Worship are part of the life of the school and make a good contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff and they indicated that they find these experiences helpful to their work.
- Acts of Collective Worship are well resourced and well planned. Pupils and staff recognise the importance placed upon them and many are inspired and engaged during the experiences with parents and parishioners being invited to celebrations at key times of the year.
- The school uses the Wednesday Word leaflets to support pupils' knowledge of the Sunday gospel reading through class-based collective worship. Opportunities have been provided for pupils to attend a prayer group before school each day, (15



minutes of Jesus Time, as the parish priest likes to tell them) and this has continued with pupils now running sessions at lunchtime. Older pupils take an active role in reading prayers, organising music, assisting the adult leading the worship and general reading.

- Whole school collective worship incorporates Gospel stories in a fun, engaging way. The use of liturgical colours of cloths and banners reflect the Liturgical year. The school has assemblies, hymns and prayers themed on these also as planned with the Music Lead in collaboration with the parish priest.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Acts of Collective Worship are led well by adults, in particular, the Executive Principal and Religious Education leader. They make these accessible to pupils in a contemporary context, relating them to the mission and values of the school and liturgical themes.
- Leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plan reflect the Catholic nature of the school and the governors are briefed on the provision of Collective Worship.
- Leaders seek the views of parents, pupils and parishioners and make adaptations to enhance provision for Collective Worship.
- The school is making good progress in developing a variety of methods and styles of prayer which are continuing to grow.
- A parent responded on their questionnaire return, *'A lovely school always offering parents to attend Mass at the church or the school. Also, I really like the displays in corridors and great Bible references – very positive'*, and another wrote, *'St Edward's is an amazing school, my children really enjoy their time there. I am confident that they are getting a holistic education that will enable them to make the right choices in their adult lives'*.

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