



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St. Edward's Catholic Primary School

LEA: Newham

Inspection Date: 25th February 2015

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 406
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: 3rd October 2006

School Address:
Green Street
Upton Park
London
E13 9AX

Tel. No. 020 8472 4337
Headteacher: Mr C. Mabey
Chair of Governors: Mr R. Morgan

Information about the school

St Edward's Catholic Primary is a voluntary aided two form entry school in Upton Park in the London Borough of Newham and part of the diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Compassion Upton Park with a small number of pupils coming from adjoining parishes. There are currently 406 pupils aged 4-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 100%. There is an above average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and 75% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average as is the number of pupils who receive the pupil premium. In 2013 St Edward's became a Teaching School and together with UEL delivers the School Direct Programme. There are currently 13 schools within the alliance and the headteacher has gained NLE status

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Satisfactory 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Edward's is an outstanding school both in its effectiveness in developing pupils' religious literacy and in its success in providing experiences in ways of Catholic living and believing. This is because of the hard work, dedication and commitment of the headteacher and leaders who are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Pupil achievement and progress, the provision for Catholic education and the capacity for sustained improvement are judged to be outstanding. Prayer and worship are integral to all that the school does and opportunities for spiritual and moral development are interwoven through religious education. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models and have a clear vision for the whole school community which includes the well being of parents and families as well as initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school. Pastoral care is excellent and shared by all members of the school community. Relationships are very good and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils and parents greatly appreciate the very many opportunities offered to develop a wide range of interests through before and after school clubs and lunch time activities. Parents also welcome the high standard of care, the Catholicity of the school and the way their children's prayer life is supported and developed. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with and often exceed diocesan expectations.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2010 identified no areas for development other than those already stated by the school in its self evaluation. Since then standards in religious education have continued to rise due to the implementation of the agreed understanding of levels of attainment which have informed lesson planning and assessment. The school has maintained a constant drive to move forward by developing the use of interactive resources, new ideas and technologies to further enhance classroom education. Very good relations with deanery schools have led to regular moderation meetings to share expertise and judgements with other Catholic schools. The school has put in place effective strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. The headteacher ensures that all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Good support is given to new and non Catholic teachers. Seven teachers hold the CCRS qualification and two more are currently undertaking the course.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The experienced headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community through his commitment to all aspects of school life. Senior leaders have a clear focus on prayer and worship in which they are well supported by all staff and the local parish priest. Governors are dedicated, well informed, have a wide range of expertise and are fully involved in the life of the school. Robust systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all pupils. The current religious education subject leader is well placed to support colleagues through monitoring and demonstration lessons. She has attended diocesan training linked to the religious education scheme 'Come and See' which she has disseminated to colleagues.

What the school should do to improve further

As identified in the School Improvement Plan

- Develop a comprehensive system for tracking pupil progress and achievement to ensure that all pupils are reaching their potential in religious education.
- Ensure that the teaching of modern British values are clearly linked to Gospel values and embedded throughout school life and the curriculum.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement is reviewed regularly and known by all. Pupils are given many opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the School Council and as prefects. Pupils are involved with several local, national and international charities including Cafod, Anchor House and support for the Ebola appeal. Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as part of a global community with responsibilities for other people and the environment. Pupils show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is excellent and pupils value the sense of community and belonging created within the school. Conversations with pupils indicated that they appreciate the help given by their teachers and other members of staff.

Prayer and worship are central to school life at St Edward's. Liturgies, masses and celebrations are open to parents and parishioners and are carefully planned. Pupils are given many opportunities to participate fully in assemblies and class acts of worship. Music and singing are very good and play a major part in worship. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Church's liturgical year with its seasons and celebrations. Older pupils are also beginning to make links between the sacraments and the life of Christ. The environment for prayer and worship is good. Each class has an attractive prayer table which is used as a focus for class worship. Pupils are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. They can use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, meditation and their own prayers, many examples of which were seen during the inspection. Pupils' own prayers are used in masses and assemblies. Older pupils are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. A learning mentor is available to support vulnerable pupils who feel safe, well cared for and know that all members of staff are there to help. Pupils are involved in decision making and citizenship through the school council and value their school and all it offers. A number of children are trained as school buddies and take an active role in helping at break times. Pupils know they are respected, listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents speak very highly of the school, the headteacher and the care given to their children. They appreciate the support the school gives to the whole family and the help offered through parent workshops and courses. They praise the excellent quality of education, the support given to their children's prayer life and the commitment and approachability of staff.

Pupil attainment and progress in religious education is outstanding. The school carefully evaluates progress and standards and indicates that from a low base pupils make good progress year on year so that by the time they reach Year 6 attainment reaches and sometimes exceeds diocesan

expectations. All lessons observed during the inspection were good or outstanding and pupils worked with interest and commitment. Cross curricular links are evident with one Year 3 lesson conducted in French, the school's Modern Foreign Language. Early Years teachers provide a good foundation which is built on throughout the years. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to show real understanding of the structure of the mass. In Key Stage 2 pupils are confident in finding bible references and are learning in depth about the four gospels. One exceptionally outstanding lesson in Year 6 portrayed the Last Supper through drama and dialogue and enabled pupils to use their knowledge of the gospels to understand how Jesus is the bread of life. In conversation pupils said they enjoy their religious education lessons and like the wide range of activities involved. They are eager to participate and work well together whether in groups or pairs. They have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and are able to apply religious ideas to their own lives. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate excellent progress made by all groups. Pupils are polite and thoughtful to adults and each other.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The effectiveness of leadership at all levels is outstanding. The dedicated headteacher is well supported by his assistant headteachers and subject leader as he demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way he inspires and promotes the provision for Catholic life. He is deeply committed to excellence and achieves this by rigorous monitoring and a balance of challenge and support. He communicates a clear vision to the whole community which is affirmed by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The partnership between school, home and parish is excellent and families have been helped to access appropriate support for their needs. The leadership team give priority to Catholic Life and religious education in the school improvement plan and have developed a system of self-evaluation which is detailed and accurate. Together they have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues.

The subject leader together with senior leaders monitors religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. She acts as a catechist for new and non Catholic teachers and supports colleagues through demonstration lessons. In addition she runs workshops for parents to enable them to support their children's faith journey. There is currently a very strong focus on planning and assessment as the school consolidates the implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme and the updated Curriculum Directory. The school has put in place strategies to give further challenge to all groups of pupils. Staff development has a high priority and includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

Governors are very active in the life of the school and are involved with the review of policy and procedure. They work closely with senior leadership and have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are very well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report and frequent visits. They are in a good position to challenge and support effectively. An annual staff/ governor retreat day is held to re-affirm the school's Catholic vision. There is also a termly 'Governors' Day' when all governors are present in the school to meet staff, pupils and parents. There is a programme of close liaison with subject leaders which enables the link governor to have a detailed understanding of developments in religious education. The local parish priest plays a major role in the life of the school. He visits every week for a planned programme of masses and liturgies. He also acts as an additional resource in classroom religious education.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Other faiths are well taught and supported by a programme of visits to other places of worship. The school has developed multi-faith units which add to pupils' understanding of their local community. There are very good links with other deanery schools, both denominational and local authority run through the St Edward's Teaching School Alliance as well as sporting and cultural events. Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to develop a sense of service within school and to show compassion for others through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local and wider community. Older pupils are developing an understanding of the theology underpinning this work. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Regular retreat days are held for Year 6 pupils and groups of Year 5 children join a pilgrimage to Rome, the cost of

which is subsidised by Pupil Premium money. A visit to Westminster Abbey to see the tomb of St Edward was a highlight of the past year. Parents are welcomed to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They appreciate the good level of contact with the school which includes regular questionnaires and curriculum information letters which enable them to support their children's education and faith journey.

Provision

Grade 1

Provision for prayer and worship at St Edward's is outstanding. Eucharistic celebrations, prayer and liturgies are central to the life of the school. They are very well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection the headteacher and pupils led a powerful assembly where the four gospels were explored through question and answer sessions. In class pupils were observed reading and writing their own bidding prayers and preparing for a class assembly on the life of Saint Patrick. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for meditation and personal reflection. The learning environment is vibrant and colourful. Each classroom has a very attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include children's work. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to masses and many other celebrations. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions. Links with the local parish are very good with so many pupils wishing to act as altar servers at Sunday mass that there is currently a waiting list.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is excellent. During the inspection lessons observed were good or outstanding. They are planned carefully with clear learning intentions and a varied range of activities. The school has made a major investment in resources including sets of bibles for Key Stage 2 which has led to increased familiarity with scripture. Pupils benefit from the high profile given throughout the school to religious education lessons. In all classes observed pupils were fully engaged and made very good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take every opportunity to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was evident in lessons observed. Very good support by teaching assistants enables all groups of pupils to make progress. This was a feature of lessons especially in Early Years. Marking is positive, interactive and enables pupils to identify next steps in their learning. Very good monitoring, assessment, planning and tracking supports the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is outstanding. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The religious education programme 'Come and See' has been in place for two years and is now embedded. The headteacher gives religious education a central place in the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. Vibrant religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development. The support given to families through a wide range of extra curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current high standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.