



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: St Patrick's School

LEA: Waltham Forest

Inspection Date: 29th March 2017

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: 422
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: November 2011

School Address:
1 Longfield Ave,
Walthamstow,
London
E17 7DP

Tel. No. 0208 509 4321
Headteacher: Mr R Protsiv
Chair of Governors: Fr Kevin T. Conway, SMA

Information about the school

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is two form entry in Walthamstow in the London borough of Waltham Forest and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary, St Patrick's and Christ the King. There are currently 442 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. A high proportion of pupils, almost 90% come from minority ethnic groups of whom 66% have English as a second language. 86% of pupils are Catholics as are 73% of teachers, two of whom have the CCRS qualification. The proportion of pupils with special needs is around the national average. In recent years the school has become part of the Aquinas teaching and learning trust along with other Catholic schools in the deanery: this is enabling schools to support each other.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Patrick's is an outstanding Catholic school with many strong features. These include very good leadership, a Catholic ethos which is evident in the daily life of the school and excellent provision for prayer and worship. Pupils are given many opportunities for spiritual and moral development through the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The quality of pupils' learning and progress in religious education is good as are the standards of attainment. There is regular monitoring of teaching, learning, and assessment. Governors are proactive, know the school well and offer an excellent level of challenge and support. Pastoral care is very good and shared with all staff. Relationships within the school and with the local parish are very good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents are happy with religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school has a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2011 identified two areas for development. The first involved the establishment of a focus group to promote existing and future ecology developments within the school community. This has been part of the remit of the school council, eco-warriors and other school groups. School assemblies have also helped pupils to reflect on issues raised in 'Laudato Si'. The second area highlighted the need for effective religious education assessment tracking procedures. This is now in place and the new subject leader has adapted previous practice to ensure all staff are confident when assessing pupils' levels of attainment. All staff are well supported by the subject leader and in-service sessions. They are encouraged to improve their skills through diocesan training and embarking on the CCRS course. Regular, rigorous monitoring is ensuring that teaching is constantly improving and well differentiated.

The quality of self-evaluation is very good. The school documentation is detailed, accurate and gives a comprehensive analysis of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. The curriculum which follows the 'Come and See' programme enables pupils to make connections between faith and their own lives. There are very good links with the schools in the trust including the Catholic secondary schools to which most pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community and is well supported by his senior leadership team. Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise and a very good knowledge of the everyday life of the school. The Chair of governors who is the parish priest from St Patrick's, is also link governor for religious education. He visits every week and liaises with senior leadership and subject leaders. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which are leading to very good outcomes for all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to support the professional development of teachers to ensure their subject knowledge is of a high standard.
- Continue to refine the assessment and moderation process with other schools in the trust.
- Build on current good practice to give pupils increased opportunities to plan and lead liturgies and collective worship.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupil achievement and progress in religious education are very good. All pupils spoken to said they enjoy religious education and the wide range of activities involved. They have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and abilities. All lessons observed were well planned with a range of interesting cross curricular activities including literacy, art, technology, design and word processing. Year 3 pupils had made Easter tombs and gardens to their own designs using a variety of materials. Pupils are given a good foundation in Early Years classes which is built upon as they progress through the school. By Year 6 pupils can discuss aspects of the Easter Vigil quoting appropriate scripture references and religious vocabulary. Any underachievement is remedied by the use of 'Philosophy for Children' techniques and additional support. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they are working at a high level. On the day of the inspection it was noted that carefully differentiated support enables all pupils to achieve well and make good progress. Across the school workbooks are well presented and show pupils' progress and coverage of the curriculum. Marking is positive with many examples of developmental and 'next steps' comments.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are given responsibilities to support the life of the school as school council members and Liturgy leaders. Pupils also form a 'Circle of Friends' group to help socialisation at lunchtimes. School council members suggest the charities they wish to support and these have included Haven House hospice, Samaritan's Purse Shoebox appeal, CAFOD as well as the local Christian Kitchen charity. Pupils spoken to were able to link support for the needy with the life and teachings of Jesus. There are excellent links with the local parish with regular Masses in school and the nearby parish church. Pupils show consideration and respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is very good and pupils value the sense of friendship and community created within the school. They are aware of the support available to them and feel safe, cared for and know where to go when they need help. An emotional literacy support assistant and a play therapist are employed by the school to offer support to pupils with emotional needs. These interventions are having a positive impact on pupils as they develop. Parents value the care given to their children and the good level of communication with the school.

Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and participate confidently in daily worship in class and assemblies. The cycle of celebrations reflects the Church's liturgical year and enables pupils to understand how faith links to everyday experiences. They respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey through reflective prayer. 'Lectio divina' in Year 5 enabled pupils to reflect on scripture supported by their teachers' sensitive comments and good subject knowledge. Pupils are involved in the preparation for Masses and have a good grasp of religious terminology appropriate to their ages. They are offered the sacrament of Reconciliation in Advent and Lent. Pupils learn the traditional prayers of the Church as well as writing their own, many of which were seen during the inspection. New liturgies including the 'Crowning of Mary' and a 'Little Ways Week' have been introduced as well as an established Rosary group in May and October. Pupils appreciate contributing to collective worship and would benefit from being given more opportunities to plan, lead, organise and evaluate their liturgies.

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment meet or exceed diocesan expectations and tracking indicates that all groups make good progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. School leadership gives religious education the same importance as other core subjects and uses staff meeting time and in-service sessions to promote the continual development of the subject.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher and senior team demonstrate excellent leadership through the way they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic life. They communicate a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and are supported in this by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. Catholicity is evident in displays around the school as well as in the classroom prayer areas. During the inspection the head teacher and subject leader led a moving assembly on Sunday's gospel reading, 'Jesus and the Blind Man.' Pupils led the prayers and

were attentive throughout and keen to contribute. Singing was excellent and all pupils participated with enthusiasm. The subject leader leads a gospel assembly at the beginning of each week which supports pupils' moral and spiritual development. Leaders also ensure there are good links with Brentwood diocese through attendance at conferences and deanery meetings.

Governors demonstrate a high level of commitment to the Catholic life of the school. Many governors are of long standing and have a wide knowledge and understanding of the school. They are well informed about its life through the headteacher's report and visits to school events as well as regular reports from the link governor. Along with the headteacher they monitor the school's provision for prayer and worship as well as religious education. They review the impact of the religious education action plan each year along with the school development plan. Governors have accessed training provided by the diocese which has enabled them to evaluate aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

The subject leader for religious education produces a targeted action plan each year which is reviewed by staff and governors. She is well placed to support colleagues through workbook scrutiny, observing teaching and evaluating outcomes. Feedback after lesson observations is resulting in improvements in teaching and learning. She also recognises the need to extend the subject knowledge of new teachers. Parent workshops and the use of pupil voice are a useful source of information. Assessment is enabling pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the relevant concepts although further refinement is necessary.

School leaders ensure that St Patrick's is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities and participates in local community events. There are also breakfast and after school clubs to help and support families. There are excellent links with other deanery schools through the Aquinas trust. Provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings. They also receive information about religious education through curriculum information newsletters and the 'Wednesday Word' which is funded by St Patrick's parish.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or better. From a low starting point pupils are given a very good start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and a wide range of engaging activities. The use of 'Philosophy for Children' and the 'Big Questions' give excellent opportunities for discussion and reflection. All groups of pupils make very good progress and behaviour for learning is excellent. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding. Well differentiated tasks enable pupils to work with enthusiasm and interest. Good support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive with 'next steps' comments giving pupils suggestions of ways to improve. There is every indication that current good standards are likely to be maintained.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is very good. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to the subject. The programme 'Come and See' has been implemented throughout the school and is now embedded. It is enhanced by 'Journey in Love' materials and very good parish links including weekly visits to the church for Mass with parishioners. There are good quality resources to support the curriculum including class sets of bibles in Key Stage 2 which give pupils immediate access to scripture. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the importance of faith to the work of the school. These include Stations of the Cross designed by pupils from across the school. Other faiths are taught well and include visits to other places of worship. 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.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Patrick's is outstanding. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They include visual presentations, Bible readings, drama, singing and music. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and a display board which includes children's work. Feast day Masses are celebrated throughout the year

and the traditions of the Church are explored with pupils. A prayer garden gives additional opportunities for reflection and worship. Year 5 pupils go on an annual retreat to support their faith journey and Year 6 pupils prepare a liturgy service which takes place during their residential trip. Parents and families are invited to 'Merit' assemblies and Masses in the church, as well as the 'Crowning of Mary' liturgy after which pupils serve refreshments to older members of the parish.

The school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. Tracking is providing a clear picture of pupils' progress in all key stages. There is evidence that very good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current very good practice in all areas.

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.