



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St Edmund's Primary School**

Duncan Street, Calne Wiltshire SN9

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DfES Number:865/5204

Headteacher: Mr Michael O'Keefe  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Marie Sawyer

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> July 2012  
Date of previous inspection: 28/29 March 2007

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P. J. Antolik

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## **Description of School**

St Edmund's Catholic School is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves the town of Calne and the surrounding area. The school is set in attractive grounds, with areas to play and sit quietly. Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. A few are at the early stage of learning English. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are below average. The school has a below-average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Pupils with speech, language and communication needs form the largest group with additional needs. Pupils are taught in single-age classes throughout the school. The school converted to academy status in September 2011. There are 36% Catholic children in the school and 50% Catholic teachers. The remaining pupils and staff are all Christian.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

### **Grade 1**

St Edmunds is an outstanding school. High expectations, excellent relationships, a clear focus on the development of the whole child and a creative Religious Education curriculum contribute to the excellent Catholic education provided by the school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very positive about their learning in a strongly motivated, caring environment. The results are excellent overall in Religious Education. Pupils benefit from and contribute to a varied range of opportunities provided by the school to develop its Catholic character. They are becoming more independent in leading prayer and worship and engage very well in the prayer and liturgical life of the school and parish. Their spiritual and moral development is exceptional.

The school provides an excellent Catholic education. Pupils are provided with a Religious Education curriculum which is rich and innovative and promotes purposeful learning. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is extremely creative.

The quality of the prayer life of the school is outstanding throughout. Personal development, care and progress of pupils are excellent. The school council shared a clear understanding of the Catholic life of the school, "we all belong to the family of God, our teachers and pupils love and care one another."

This is a school which knows itself very well, identifies priorities, secures improvement and thrives on challenge in all aspects of its work and mission.

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## **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

### **Grade 1**

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding due to strong, open and compassionate leadership. Leaders and governors work seamlessly together to ensure that the school's shared mission, vision and aims are driven forward with a commitment to excellence in all areas. Morale is exceedingly high, with belief in the school's success running through all staff. There is a real sense of everyone working together to promote, with commitment and pride, the Catholic life of the school. This results in sustained and continuing improvement to outcomes for pupils in all aspects.

Improvements since the last Diocesan Inspection have been outstanding. This increasingly open culture has shown improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to develop and enhance other aspects of chaplaincy.
- Continue to evaluate the new RE syllabus against the current syllabus 'Here I Am'.

### **How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?**

#### **Grade 1**

From average and below average starting points on entering Foundation Stage, pupils make outstanding progress in Religious Education throughout all key stages. Achievement, with reference to their starting points is good. Almost all pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and demonstrate high quality oral learning skills given their capabilities. They are becoming more skilled in reflecting on meaning and in their ability to relate knowledge and understanding in Religious Education to their everyday lives. Some pupils are able to express their understanding in depth. There is a continuous pattern of improvement in standard over time. Pupils work hard in all classes, speak enthusiastically about their learning and show very positive attitudes in all aspects of their work. They work with concentration and want to do well. Oral, practical and creative skills in Religious Education are outstanding.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take full advantage of all the opportunities the school provides and work closely with the parish and wider communities. They have a strong sense belonging to their school and parish church. They quickly celebrate, thank and congratulate others and treat others with respect. They seek justice and fairness and protect the rights of others very well. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are able to give thanks and praise and readily express forgiveness.

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Pupil's response to Prayer and Worship is outstanding. They have an excellent capacity for prayer and worship. They lead and partake in acts of celebration and prayer from their earliest years which has a significant impact on their liturgical formation. They know and use the key elements of worship in a range of settings. As a result, pupils engage well during prayer with reverence and respect. All pupils are taught creative ways to pray and celebrate, which enhances their own and others' ability to worship. The whole school assembly which took place during the inspection was a joyful and vibrant experience for all. Children were fully engaged and focused throughout the prayerful gathering, enthusiastically participating in the singing led by their school orchestra, supported by their peripatetic teacher. They appreciate being able to use the Prayer room in the school, which caters for all faith backgrounds. The room is a beautiful peaceful prayer room, decorated according to the time in the liturgical year.

Relative to their starting points pupils make progress in Religious Education throughout all key stages. Almost all pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and demonstrate high quality oral learning skills. They are becoming more skilled in reflecting on meaning and in their abilities to relate knowledge and understanding in Religious Education to their everyday lives. Some pupils are able to express their understanding in depth. There is a continuous pattern of improvement in standards over time. Pupils work hard in nearly all classes, speak enthusiastically about their learning and show very positive attitudes in all aspects of their work. They work with concentration and want to do well. Tasks are set to enable children to reach higher levels. The school has rightly highlighted the need to continue to provide opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge through written tasks where they can demonstrate a language of faith that shows a deeper understanding of the implications of belief in their everyday life.

### **How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic Life of the school?**

#### **Grade1**

The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school. All the staff of the school work together as a community. They are a source of inspiration for the whole community. Highly effective school self-evaluation and challenge ensures that all aspects of Catholic life are continuously improving. The school's Catholic mission lies at the heart of all school development planning. Pupils are able to articulate a mature understanding of the Catholic ethos and are actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

Very strong links exist between school and the parish priest.

The level of monitoring and analysis of the provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Expectations and outcomes for pupils are high as efficient and ongoing improvement of assessment strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards. The Religious Education coordinator, (head teacher) ably supported by his experienced and skilled deputy head and RE link governor is continuing to uphold high standards and lead the subject with enthusiasm and fresh ideas. Areas for development are identified and plans for improvement in place.

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The governing body makes a significant and outstanding contribution to the work and Catholic dimension of the school. It discharges its statutory and canonical responsibilities very well. There is a good range of expertise amongst governors who work efficiently and effectively with parents, staff and pupils for the good of the school. They are fully informed about the strengths of the school and are proactive in tackling areas of weakness and holding the school to account. The governors, staff and parish are working on the document "People of Hope"; this relationship is both strong and supportive.

As a result of the dedication and commitment of the headteacher and staff of the school, they are outstanding at developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services. The partnerships have a positive and enjoyable impact on the learning and social development of pupils and staff alike.

The ways in which leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion is outstanding. The school has forged many and varied links both in the parish and wider and global communities. The School Council are active in their support for many of the wider global issues they wish to support, and talked enthusiastically about their raising funds for CAFOD. These links ensure pupils understand their place in the world and the responsibilities they have towards others. Prayer and Worship is inclusive and makes an important contribution in developing a spirit of community and unity within the school. Religious Education helps pupils develop attitudes of respect and acceptance for people of all faith and beliefs.

## **How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?**

### **Grade 1**

The provision for Catholic Education is outstanding. The overall standard of teaching in Religious Education is good with outstanding elements resulting in good quality and purposeful learning. Teachers plan thoroughly using their knowledge of pupils' capabilities and starting points. Pupils are aware of how well they are achieving and development of skills at knowing how to improve. Outstanding deployment of support staff ensures that all pupils achieve their best. Resources, including ICT, are well used to make learning exciting and accessible. Pupils are highly motivated because the majority of teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are secure and skilled in facilitating excellent learning and pupil progress.

Assessment and monitoring strategies are securely in place and are used to measure individual progress. Staff are well led in using pupil data to move the assessment skills onto the "Next Step" targets. The pupils know they are expected to work hard but that they will receive support where needed.

The school provides an outstanding, imaginative Religious Education curriculum which fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Teachers provide a rich and stimulating range of experiences and activities which enable the pupils to thrive in their learning. The curriculum is creative and multi-sensory and contributes significantly

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towards developing pupils' spiritual and moral development. Staff and pupils alike are highly motivated and engaged. Pupils speak warmly and knowledgeably about their work. The learning environment is vibrant and eye-catching which enthuses pupils and captures their imagination. All classrooms have prayer corners which both the children and staff are immensely proud of and approach with reverence and respect and are used as areas of quiet reflection. Pupils are encouraged to share their own ideas and concerns and know that their contributions are highly valued.

Prayer and Worship is central to the life of the school and its quality is outstanding. Staff worship together, meeting in their school Prayer room before the start of the day, on set mornings and this is highly effective in teaching key elements of worship to their pupils. Pupils' liturgical and spiritual formation is well planned, appropriate to faith background and age and is progressive. Strong links to the parish support pupils' ability to lead and participate in a variety and range of prayerful and liturgical celebrations and the parishioners also support after school clubs. Regular celebrations are well supported by families and have a significant impact on them. A key strength in worship is the skilled and prayerful use of images, music and drama.