



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: St Aidan's Primary School

LEA: Redbridge

Inspection Date: 29th September 2017

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Academy
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 416
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Board
Date of previous inspection: September 2012

School Address:
Benton Road
Seven Kings
Ilford
IG1 4AS

Tel. No. 01279 424452
Executive Headteacher: Mrs S Johnson
Chair of Governors: Mr G Reynolds

Information about the school

St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy is a two form entry school in Ilford in the London borough of Redbridge and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parishes of St Cedd's, St Teresa's and SS Peter and Paul, all about a mile away. There are currently 416 pupils aged 4-11 on roll as well as 20 in the nursery on a part time basis. The majority of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds with over 50% speaking English as an additional language. 50% of pupils are Catholics with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations, other faiths or none. 50% of the teachers are Catholics and five have the CCRS or similar qualification. The proportion of pupils with special needs is around the national average. The school has had a period of turbulence recently and there is now a new leadership team in place and an interim governing body. Most teachers are new to the school this term, many on a supply basis.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Aidan's is a good Catholic school. Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning in religious education. The quality of the prayer and collective worship provided by the school and the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from its Catholic life are good. The new leadership team has put in place a rapid improvement plan which is leading to better outcomes for all pupils. The Catholic ethos is evident in the daily life of the school with prayer and worship being central to its work. Pupils are given 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. Pastoral care is good and shared with priests from the local parishes and all staff. Relationships within the school and with the local parishes are good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents are generally happy with religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school now has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2012 identified a number of areas linked to religious education which have not been fully addressed. However, they are included in the current development plan which is rigorous and comprehensive. The executive headteacher has a clear vision for future development and she is supported in this by the head of school and the deputy headteacher. Together with the subject leader they have produced an action plan to sustain effectiveness and put in place further improvements. New teachers are given guidance and support on classroom worship which involves pupils in using their own prayers as well as the traditional prayers of the Church. There are plans to develop regular, rigorous monitoring to ensure that teaching is relevant and appropriate to children's needs.

The quality of self-evaluation is good. The school documentation is accurate and gives a comprehensive analysis of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. There are strategies in place to share good practice and support new teachers. The curriculum which follows the 'Come and See' programme enables pupils to make connections between faith and their own lives. Staff are supported by the subject leader and senior staff as well as in-service training. Good links with other diocesan primary schools are being developed.

The current leadership has a good capacity to maintain and improve effectiveness. The executive headteacher and head of school show good leadership of a Catholic community and are well supported by the deputy and subject leader. The recently appointed interim governing body includes members who have a wide range of expertise and a good knowledge of the daily life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which are leading to good outcomes for all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further as identified in the development plan:

- Develop and revise effective assessment and tracking in religious education in order to monitor progress more effectively.
- Put in place training for all teachers to improve the number of outstanding religious education lessons.

- Improve the overall provision for religious education and collective worship throughout the school by purchasing additional resources.
- Continue to develop links with parents to help them have a good understanding of the school's approach to religious education.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Pupil achievement and progress in religious education are good. All pupils spoken to said they enjoy religious education and the range of activities involved, particularly art, debate and role-play. Pupils observed during the inspection worked well together and had a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and abilities. Lessons observed were well planned with a range of cross curricular activities especially in Early Years and Key Stage 1. In several Key Stage 2 lessons teachers encouraged pupils to use bibles and access scripture with confidence. Across the school workbooks are well presented and show pupils' progress and coverage of the curriculum. Marking is positive and the best examples help pupils make the 'next steps' in their learning. Other faiths are taught well and include a visit to a local Moslem school in Year 5.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. Last year pupils raised funds for Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, Operation Christmas Child and Cafod. Pupils are given responsibilities to support the life of the school as school council members, members of the Liturgy team and as house leaders. There are good links with the local parishes with a Christmas Carol service and an Easter production held in the church. Regular school and class Masses are held when pupils act as altar servers, readers and offertory takers. During the inspection a Year 6 class prepared and led a 'rejoice' assembly which used an adapted parable of the Lost Sheep to illustrate God's love for everyone. Many parents were present, all pupils participated and the singing was excellent. The Liturgy team have been trained to prepare and set up for Mass in school. Local priests come in every week for class Masses and act as an additional teaching resource.

Pupils are well behaved and show consideration and respect for adults and each other. Pupils spoken to said they value the sense of security, friendship and community created within the school. They are familiar with the school's mission statement, 'Together we enjoy learning, achieving, sharing and praying. Let Jesus' love shine through in everything we do,' which is on display throughout the school. Pupils are aware of the support available to them and know where to go when they need help.

Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and participate readily. 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. Pupils are involved in the preparation for Masses and assemblies and have a good grasp of religious terminology appropriate to their ages. They learn the traditional prayers of the Church as well as writing their own, many of which were seen during the inspection. They are familiar with the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary which is led by the Liturgy team during May and October. Preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation in Year 3 are parish based with support from the school.

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment meet diocesan expectations and all groups make good progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of individuals and groups. School leadership gives religious education the same importance as other core subjects and uses staff meeting time and in-service sessions to support teachers.

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The recently appointed executive headteacher, head of school and deputy demonstrate good leadership. After a period of instability and many staff changes they have put in place a rapid improvement plan for standards in religious education which is already bearing fruit. Leaders communicate a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and are supported in this by staff and the interim governing body all of whom are committed to providing the best possible environment for the

pupils. Parish links are fostered by invitations to school masses and other celebrations. Catholicity is evident in displays around the school and in the classroom prayer areas.

An interim governing body has been appointed and includes members who have a wide range of expertise in Catholic education. They are well placed to monitor the school's provision for prayer and worship as well as religious education. Governors are invited to visit the school regularly and have accessed training provided by the diocese to enable them to evaluate aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

The subject leader supported by senior leadership has produced a targeted action plan for religious education and is well placed to assist new teachers. She holds training sessions for all staff and supports them to ensure that all pupils achieve well through differentiated tasks. She has also led sessions about other faiths to ensure all staff are confident in these areas. Assessment is being revised to enable pupils to better demonstrate their knowledge of the relevant concepts. Leaders support staff development and teachers are provided with in-service training.

School leaders make every effort to ensure that St Aidan's is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities as well as Breakfast and After School Clubs and participates in local community events. There are developing links with other diocesan schools including the Catholic secondary schools to which some pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2. Understanding of other faiths and cultures is supported by a visit for year 5 pupils to a local Moslem school during Islam Awareness Week. 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 and weekly newsletters.

Provision

Grade 2

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. During the inspection, all lessons observed were good. Pupils are given a sound start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and a range of activities. Pupils make good progress and behaviour for learning is also good. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and are well supported by leadership. Differentiated tasks enable pupils to work with enthusiasm and interest. Effective support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive and in some year groups there are 'next steps' comments and suggestions of ways to improve. Once this is extended over all groups current good standards are likely to be further improved.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is good. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The programme 'Come and See' has been implemented throughout the school and is now embedded. It is enhanced by 'Journey in Love' and visits from healthcare professionals. There are plans to improve resources including more sets of Bibles. Other faiths are taught well. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the importance of faith to its work.. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes well to their spiritual and moral development.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Aidan's is good. 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 often includes children's work. Feast day Masses are celebrated throughout the year and the traditions of the Church are explored with pupils. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The local priests support the school through Masses and classroom visits. Pupils have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation at Advent and Lent.

The school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. The new leadership team is currently reviewing assessment procedures to prepare the school for changes envisaged later in the year. There is evidence that good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current 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.