

Report of the Denominational (Section 48) Inspection of  
Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

***St Augustine's Catholic Primary School***

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DFE No: 926/3376  
URN: 121130

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mr Gerard Watt

Headteacher: Mr Adrian La Chapelle

Denominational Inspector: Mrs Rosemary Barker

Date of Inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St. Augustine's is a one-form entry primary school with a nursery class, providing education for pupils from 3 to 11 years of age. Located in the village of Costessey on the outskirts of Norwich, it draws pupils from both the Catholic parish of St. Walstan (currently served by the cathedral parish of St. John) and the local community. There are 244 pupils on roll, of whom 56% are Catholic. Pupils come from a mixed range of socio-economic backgrounds with 7% of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with English as an Additional Language or from Ethnic Minority backgrounds has grown in recent years and now stands at 29%. 11% of pupils have Special Educational Needs (SEN) of whom 1.5% are supported by an SEN Statement. The school is over-subscribed and with an admission limit of 30 pupils must apply its admission policy to allocate places.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

### Grade: 1

St Augustine's School is an outstanding Catholic school where pupils are nurtured and empowered to develop a *"living relationship with a living God"*. Prayer and worship are of central importance in the school's life and its strong Catholic identity is visible and real in the everyday life of the school. The headteacher leads a committed leadership team, fully supported by the Governing Body and School Chaplain, who together, effectively promote a strong sense of spiritual purpose. All staff demonstrate the values inherent in the Catholic ethos and value the high profile given to Religious Education (RE).

Relationships within the school are very good. A children's version of the school Mission Statement agreed through the work of the School Council reflects the Christian values of love, care and respect towards all. Pupils commented - *"We feel safe"*, *"Teachers listen ...you can rely on them to help you"*. Our school is *"absolutely amazing"*. The pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Good behaviour and positive attitudes were consistently evidenced in whole school gatherings, small group work in class, and individual responses and application to tasks set. Pupils produce high quality work and make good progress in RE.

The self-evaluation of the school is accurate and comprehensive. The new headteacher, in post since September 2010, has a good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs. Development issues from the last inspection have been fully met with rigorous monitoring and assessment procedures now in place supporting further improvement. The school is united and focussed in its aim to provide the best possible Catholic education for its pupils. All staff are committed to the success of the school.

The school is highly valued within the local community and a strong partnership between school, parents and parish supports the growth of shared Catholic vision. The school has a very good capacity to improve.

### What the school needs to do to improve further?

- To create a focus within the main school entrance hall which gives visual impact to parents, parishioners and other visitors to the school of the spirituality and ethos of the school and its Catholic vision.
- To redevelop the whole school prayer corner as a centralised area which allows children a greater opportunity of personal, reflective thought and prayer.

**PUPILS. How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups. Grade 1**

The Catholic life of the school is of outstanding benefit to the pupils. Pupils are happy “...everyone’s nice”. Behaviour is very good, “...we don’t have any bullying” and pupils are fully aware of and commit to the high school expectations. They show respect towards adults and each other. There is a strong sense of school community and family. They enjoy sharing and celebrating each other’s achievement. They listened attentively and applauded warmly as a wide variety of achievement, both in and out of school, was recognised in the Praise Assembly. Pupils’ views and ideas are sought and taken into account through the School Council. They were part of the consultation process for the new school logo and child friendly Mission Statement, reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging within the school community.

Pupils respond very well to the prayer life of the school. They understand the importance of prayer and participate with ease and respect. They write their own prayers as part of their religious education learning, and know and use traditional prayers. The personal school assembly prayer, used daily, is an integral part of the school ethos, which succinctly reinforces positive attitudes and behaviour. A ‘quiet time’ at the start of each afternoon session gives space for pupils to reflect spiritually on RE learning and/or liturgy, for individual quiet time with God. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 choose sometimes to record these thoughts and feelings in their prayer journals. Regular Mass and Liturgy involve pupils in all aspects of preparation, organisation and participation such as setting up the altar, making the hall ready, greeting visitors, projecting hymn words, new responses and meditative pictures appropriate to the liturgy. The opportunity to serve at Mass, to read and present the Gospel, to write and offer bidding prayers is shared by all pupils. High quality singing enhances the worship experience and pupils enjoy the new hymns learned.

Pupils make good progress in religious literacy during their time in the school. They achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed this. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially those linked to practical activities. The use of ‘I wonder...’ statements demonstrated highly developed thinking skills and a depth of mature thought and spirituality further demonstrated in lessons observed in Years 2 and 5. Pupils could empathise with different events and people of Holy Week and articulate their thoughts and feelings in age appropriate ways, each in the role of an active participant. Pupils take a pride in their religious education work. Books are well presented and evidence a good coverage of the curriculum.

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS. How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school? Grade 1**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the Catholic ethos of the school and a commitment which is empowering for the whole school community. Pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development and growth is a strength of the school. Relationships with families and parish are outstanding.

The religious education co-ordinator with strong support from the liturgy co-ordinator and headteacher maintains a high profile for RE across the school. She was part of a small proactive team responsible for the development of the RE Curriculum Plan for Primary Schools in the Diocese of East Anglia, providing the school with a comprehensive and structured framework for RE supplemented and enhanced by a range of published schemes. The liturgy co-ordinator’s role is complementary, providing a coherent timetable for Holy Mass,

liturgical celebration and assemblies with readings, hymns and prayers which are both meaningful and age appropriate. RE is well resourced with an annual budget which reflects its importance as a core subject. Teachers are guided and supported well in delivery of the curriculum.

Mass and Liturgy are celebrated in school on alternate weeks with either the School Chaplain or Church Deacon. Their commitment within a busy schedule of responsibilities is invaluable.

Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They possess a wide range of valuable skills, and are very supportive and well-informed about the work of the school. The Chair of Governors attends school cluster meetings alongside the headteacher. Governors attend courses to develop new skills to support changing roles and needs. Formal monitoring by the RE Governor takes place regularly as well as informal monitoring by governors attending school events, liturgy celebrations and visiting classrooms. Some governors also serve on the parish council creating a strong bond between school and parish.

The school is a welcoming, inclusive community which is high profile in the local area. Both extended family and parish family members visit the school to join pupils for liturgies and the celebration of Mass. Pupils show compassion for others through their charity work for Cafod and other national and local charities. The school holds the 'International Status' award and pupils' global knowledge is expanded through the new International Primary Curriculum implemented this year and links with schools in other countries. Other faiths and cultures are taught. Visits from other faith members of the school community enrich their learning and extend their understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Pupils have also visited other places of worship.

### **PROVISION. How effective is the provision for Catholic education: Grade 1**

Worship and prayer are integral in the day to day actions of the school community with regular Mass confirming the value placed on the school's sacramental life. Catholic traditions are reinforced with the praying of the Rosary in May and October, and a re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Traditional prayer plus reflections and prayers written by older pupils, led the congregation at St. Walstan's through the Stations, each represented by a moving tableau presented by the younger pupils - a truly spiritual experience. This year, the school plans to reintroduce the May procession to Our Lady. Each classroom has a prayer table providing a focus for prayer, reflection and learning with a changing display of appropriate liturgical religious artefacts, bibles and books. Pupil's work and contributions add to displays. The school chaplain hears confessions in school during Advent and Lent.

The quality of religious education lessons seen was very good and engaged pupils in well planned and purposeful tasks. The teachers had secure knowledge, and teaching was supported by good visual presentations, role play re-enactments and practical activities. The cross curricular links in the Reception class lesson observed enabled these very young pupils to access the idea of how to "...grow like Jesus". In Year 2 pupils in their role of participants at the crucifixion made insightful comments about how they were feeling. In Year 5 Fine art pictures were the basis of a scriptural journey through events from Peter's point of view and demonstrated well-developed thinking skills. Teacher/pupil interaction supported high quality pupil dialogue. Pupils were interested and motivated. The pace of lessons was good.

The school has a well-developed system of assessment in place. Staff are becoming increasingly confident in using data from monitoring, detached plenaries and work scrutiny to

evaluate both academic and spiritual progress and assess attainment levels. These will be reported to parents this year alongside the usual effort levels. Pupil progress is also tracked on the school's electronic 'Pupil Access' system and confirms achievement across the school population with no groups under achieving. Positive marking in books includes comments and questions leading to religious/spiritual growth.

There is good coverage of the RE curriculum, using the new syllabus in conjunction with 'Here I Am', 'Come and See' and 'The Way, the Truth, and the Light' published schemes. Children are encouraged to think deeply about issues and challenged. Work is well differentiated to meet individual needs. Children's work is in evidence in colourful and attractive wall displays.

Other faiths are taught and festivals recognised and celebrated, particularly those specific to the school population.

The quality of the curriculum is very good and suitable for the age and abilities of learners. It fulfils the requirement of the Bishops' Conference with 10% of curriculum time used for religious education.

# EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE



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## Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the diocesan inspection.

26<sup>th</sup> March 2012

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St Augustine's Primary Catholic School, Costessey, Norwich.

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. Thank you to all those pupils who spoke to me especially the group from the School Council. I was very interested in your views of your school. I enjoyed being present with you in the Reception Class, Year 2, and Year 5, for part of your Religious Education lessons and was pleased to see how well presented the work was in the RE books of all year groups. It was a great privilege to be able to share Holy Mass and Stations of the Cross with you. I enjoyed learning about your achievements and interests at your Praise assembly.

Here are some of the things I especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school that provides many opportunities for prayer and worship.
- You are friendly and considerate to each other and are well cared for by your teachers.
- You are encouraged to think deeply in a calm quiet atmosphere.
- The school provides very good opportunities for you to develop personally, spiritually and morally.
- The enjoyable and interesting tasks that your teachers plan to aid your religious education learning.

I have asked your teachers and governors to consider showing parents and visitors more explicitly the Catholic identity of the school in your main school entrance display boards, and also to develop a more accessible shared school prayer area for you to use individually and in groups.

Thank you again for your help. I wish you the very best for the future,

Yours sincerely

Mrs Rosemary Barker

Diocesan Inspector