

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

St Edmunds Catholic Primary School
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For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mrs Clare Valori

Headteacher: Mrs Maria Uragallo

Denominational Inspector:

Mrs Rosemary Barker

Dates of Inspection: 30th November 2012

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DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school located in the Suffolk town of Bungay, serving the parish of St. Edmund's. There are 103 pupils on roll 58% of whom are Catholic. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties (15%) is slightly above the national average with 3% having a statement of Special Educational Needs. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, 3%, is less than the national average. A small number of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and have English as a second language. Pupils are taught in four classes, all of which are mixed age groupings with the exception of the Reception Class. The school has gained a number of awards including Gold Junior Road Safety officers for the last 3 years and Food for Life, Bronze Award.

In September 2009 St. Edmund's together with St. Benet's Catholic Primary School, Beccles, (approximately seven miles away) became the Federation of Catholic Schools of the Waveney Valley. This was made a hard federation in September 2010 with a single governing body and an executive headteacher running both schools. The present executive headteacher was appointed in March 2011.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade: 2

St. Edmund's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. Committed leadership by the executive headteacher is driving forward the shared identity of the federation whilst still celebrating the individual character and achievement of each school. The support of all stakeholders is an integral part of that shared and individual success. Prayer and worship are of central importance and a high profile is given to religious education within a whole curriculum setting.

Good behaviour and attitudes reflect the outstanding personal, spiritual and moral development of pupils and demonstrate that the school lives its mission statement to

" ... hold Christ at the centre and recognise him in everyone as we journey together teaching and learning, challenging each other to be all that we can be."

Relationships within school are very good and reflect Christian concern and respect for others. Pupils said of teachers '*... (they) teach us everyday to get around life push us to our limitand make learning fun.*'

The self-evaluation of the school is accurate and comprehensive. The headteacher has a good overall view of strengths and development needs in the school and within the federation. Federation has provided positive advantages to the school through shared training and expertise for staff, curriculum enrichment for pupils and input from two parishes. Development needs from the last inspection have been addressed. This school and the federation has a very good capacity to improve and is moving towards its aspiration to be outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Empower pupils in their leadership of worship by developing age appropriate planning opportunities for liturgy and worship and implementing the planned development of celebrating Mass in the classroom.

- To give a higher profile to prayer tables in each classroom ensuring high quality artefacts, bibles and pictures relevant to the liturgical theme and contributions by the children themselves.
- To use the prayer tables to offer a focus for thoughtful reflection and worship as part of the religious learning as well as to stimulate personal pupil response.

PUPILS. How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups. Grade 2

The Catholic life of the school is of great benefit to the pupils. There is a strong sense of community and family. *"We know each others' names, we are like a family"* pupils said. They described themselves as friendly, kind, responsible and sociable. Behaviour is very good and pupils are fully aware of expectations for this and commit willingly. They show respect to adults and to each other. Pupils said *"there is no bullying and we know the order to do things if there are any problems"* They know their voice is important and the school council gives them the opportunity to share ideas, comment on initiatives and raise concerns *"We get everyone involved"*. A successful 'Buddy' scheme where older pupils support the younger ones in the playground, at lunch-time, at school Mass or liturgical celebrations, and a 'Playleaders' lunch-time club, effectively demonstrate the importance the pupils themselves place on being responsible.

The rhythm of the school day is based around worship. Pupils respond very well. They know and use traditional prayers, participating with ease and respect; they write their own prayers as part of their religious education learning. The Parish Priest took part in the Key Stage 1 'Advent' assembly and pupils confidently used the Mass responses to introduce and close his Gospel reading. High quality singing enhanced their worship. Parent attendance was high. A greater independence for pupils in presenting the themes and ideas would benefit, encourage and support more effective child led learning. Pupils regularly attend Mass in the adjoining church and are encouraged to visit and use the church as a resource. The Parish Priest is supportive of the plans to celebrate Mass with the pupils in their classrooms and involve the pupils in the planning and organisation, choosing appropriate readings, and hymns, writing the bidding prayers and leading the worship, at a level relevant to their age and understanding.

Pupils make good progress in religious literacy during their time at the school. They achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed this. Most pupils enjoy their lessons, particularly when these are linked to practical activities such as drama. Older pupils commented on their interest in the themes and ideas presented in 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' scheme of work recently introduced in school. In lessons observed, pupils showed a positive attitude to learning and worked co-operatively and stayed on task. Good pupil to pupil dialogue and well developed research and enquiry skills supported learning in both key stages. Pupils listened well and responded thoughtfully to questions posed. A range of interesting and appropriate creative tasks, role play and cross curricular activities planned for the youngest pupils would have benefitted from the teacher's increased pace and her planning of a firmly structured framework for effective child led learning. Clearer outcomes would have given a better focus for the plenary session.

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

Grade 2

The Headteacher is fully committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. She has a clear vision for the future of the school and understands its strengths and the challenges for

optimum growth and development within the federation structure, as she moves both schools forward to be "... a beacon of Catholic excellence." New opportunities created by the federation; shared expertise and resources; joint staff meetings and professional development; and closer links between the partner school pupils make a positive contribution to this aim. Published schemes of work linked to new diocesan guidelines developed within the Catholic schools' cluster are in place, providing a structured framework for RE. Teachers are guided and supported well in the delivery of the curriculum. The emphasis placed on pupils' spiritual, moral and social growth is a strength reinforced through events such as Year 6 attendance at the annual schools' Walsingham pilgrimage and a retreat for 'The Year of Faith.' The benefit of widening RE leadership through the appointment of a new RE Co-ordinator is recognised by the Headteacher.

Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. Two governing bodies merged into a single unit with meetings in alternate schools, has given a wide range of expertise and promoted the constructive dialogue and challenge necessary for successful integration. They are purposeful in their intentions and recognise the beneficial growth that the changes have brought about. Governors take advantage of training offered. Informal monitoring through visits, meetings, attendance at school events and services is under development for a more formal role in moderating assessment and attainment.

The school is welcoming and inclusive and works closely with the parish. Noticeboards in the shared school/parish hall provide a link which is informative to both; children were seen checking the boards as they left the hall following lunch. There are excellent links with other Catholic and local schools. Pupils are active within the local community attending musical and artistic events at the Fisher Theatre, performing at the Bungay Proms and participating in the Rotary Primary Schools Quiz (hosted by the school.)

The school and parish jointly maintain links with the small Phillipino community. This adds to pupils' global awareness alongside successful fundraising for CAFOD which includes the 'Advent for Africa' project to purchase "World Gifts".

The school web-site and email notification keeps parents informed of school activities though some parents prefer and can opt for the traditional paper newsletters. The help of parent volunteers is welcomed and there is an active 'Friends of the School' association. Parents appreciate the approachability of teachers who respond to enquiries and concerns promptly.

PROVISION. How effective is the provision for Catholic education: Grade 2

Worship and prayer are integral in the day to day actions of the school community. Regular Mass confirms the value placed on the school's sacramental life. Parishioners also attend - reinforcing strong parish/school links. *'The school is a positive benefit to the parish'* commented the Parish Priest. Occasional Sunday family Masses also include pupils who are not catholic as part of the parish family, singing the Communion hymn for the congregation. In school, Catholic traditions are celebrated, for example, devotions to Our Lady in May and October with the opportunity to pray the rosary during lunchtime sessions in these months. Reconciliation services for pupils take place in Lent and Advent. The planned progression to classroom based Mass will give pupils a more active role and promote deeper understanding. There is a coherent programme of assemblies relevant to the liturgical year encompassing Bible stories, cross curricular themes and links, parent and class assemblies. There are prayer tables in each classroom which if the best aspects of each were combined, for example, the book of personal pupil prayers, the child friendly nativity figures, attractive bibles and pictures, then these could create that reflective, thoughtful area which the constraints of the school building find hard to provide.

Teachers showed secure knowledge and understanding in religious education. At best, lessons observed were good with outstanding features, but further development is needed in areas where outcomes were only satisfactory. In both keystages lessons were well planned with purposeful tasks to motivate and enthuse pupils. Learning objectives were clear. A variety of teaching styles was seen meeting the differing learning styles of pupils with good support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupil attitudes were good and impeccable behaviour evidenced the high expectations of staff. Other world faiths are taught. New resources, for example 'World faith' artefact boxes, have been purchased to enhance learning and understanding of cultural diversity beyond the small Phillipino community in the parish and an existing link with a school in Canada. Weekly planners (Redemptorist Society) introduced following success in the partner federation school, have provided focus and direction for thoughtful class reflection. These are popular with pupils and offer self-motivated opportunities and links for religious development both at home and at school.

'The Way, the Truth and the Life' scheme is well supplemented by other schemes and diocesan guidelines. Regular assessment takes place and the school is actively monitoring expectations and standards between the diocesan documentation and national attainment standards. Pupils' work is always positively marked with encouraging comments though the marking for progression (guidance and challenge for next steps) identified by OFSTED is not yet fully evident.

Religious education meets the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. A minimum of 10% of curriculum time is given to religious education.

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

30th November 2012

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

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 to hear your views about the school and the federation. I enjoyed being present at your parents assembly and sharing your religious education lessons. Your work on Peace and Justice and on Advent as a preparation for a meaningful and spiritual celebration for Christmas was very interesting. I am sure it will encourage you all to have some very special prayers and actions to offer as presents for baby Jesus.

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 kind to each other and are well-cared for by your teachers
- The school provides very good opportunities for you to develop personally, spiritually and morally
- The enjoyable and interesting tasks that your teachers plan to help your religious education

I have asked your teachers and governors to consider giving you opportunities to plan and organise your worship, and the priest to celebrate the Mass with you in your classrooms sometimes. I have also asked them to try to find a place for quiet, spiritual and thoughtful reflection and prayer, that you can use as a whole class or in small groups to help you grow closer in your friendship with God.

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

Yours sincerely

Mrs R. Barker
Diocesan Inspector