

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

St Felix Catholic Primary School

DfE No: 935/3320

URN: 124769

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mr Stephen Kelleher

Headteacher: Mrs Clare Robinson

Denominational Inspector:

Mrs Jan Southgate

Dates of Inspection: 20th June 2016

Date and grade of previous inspection: April 2010. Grade 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Felix Catholic Primary School has expanded to a one and a half form entry school for pupils from 3 to 11 years. There are currently 335 pupils on roll of which 55% pupils are Catholic, 10% are of other Christian faiths and 3% are of other world faiths. Of the 13 staff, 38% are Catholic and two members of staff have an RE (religious education) qualification. The school serves St. Felix Church Parish but includes pupils from many areas within the town. The school receives pupils from a range of social backgrounds, and in recent years there has been a significant increase of pupils (33%) with EAL (English as an additional language) which is well above the national average of 19%.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade: 1

St Felix School is an outstanding Catholic school because of its distinctively Catholic values which permeate the way of life, and are lived out to the full, thus supporting the school's vision. The home, school, parish community is committed to providing the best opportunities for all pupils, and the partnership is highly valued by everyone involved in the school life. The Catholic ethos is intrinsic through all aspects of the school life, supporting individuals' faith journeys and inspiring a love of learning. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress, and are motivated and inspired to make further achievements. In June 2014 the school achieved the RE Quality Mark (REQM) Gold Award. All pupils are given caring, spiritual and loving guidance, enabling everyone to grow and embrace the Christian values of Jesus to support their future lives. The prayerful life of the school creates a positive, calm and peaceful atmosphere and impacts on pupils' excellent behaviour, attitudes and kindness towards each other. One pupil explained that the school community helps "make us the best that we can be." The strong, collaborative and empathetic senior leadership team, together with the parish priest and governors, is instrumental in effectively promoting the Catholic identity of the school. They ensure that the constantly developing vision of the school not only impacts on pupils' achievement, attainment and progress, but their spiritual, moral and social development.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of marking of pupils' work in all year groups provides regular opportunities for pupils to consider further challenge and understanding related to the next steps of progress.
- Offer further CPD (continual professional development) such as CCRS (Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies) to all members of staff including support staff.
- Maintain pupils' involvement in planning, leading and further developing presentations within collective worship and prayer led activities, and encourage pupils to evaluate outcomes.

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

Grade 1

The extent to which pupils are involved in and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils live out the mission of being "Followers of Jesus" by their words, prayerfulness and actions. Pupils take on ministries, are involved in the school's council and,

encouraged by their teachers in class, ably support their peers through collaborative tasks and sharing ideas. Pupils fulfil their responsibilities with care and other pupils spoke eagerly of being considered for such ministries within school. Pupils are good role models for each other, and in the pupils' meeting with the inspector, they spoke highly of their school and stated that they felt safe and happy. Pupils are given opportunities to verbally challenge themselves regarding the "Big Questions" which relate to what they already know, want to know and what they then learn to share with others. A number of pupils also spoke of and explained living out the "Five R's" through being Responsible, Resourceful, Reflective, Ready and Resilient. They organise events to support many charities and clearly enjoy their involvement. The pupils spoke of sacred words and how these help them to be not only like Jesus, but like other key religious figures, for example Mother Teresa. The school is very inclusive, and children of other world faiths are given opportunities to share aspects of their faith with other pupils. Pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development is outstanding and this is evidenced by their behaviour in school, and from feedback, when they attend local or wider community events.

Pupils relate well to their parish priest, who regularly visits each class, and a number of pupils support school and parish Masses through altar serving, participating with the readings and as musicians. All pupils participate in the sacramental and prayer life, liturgies and collective worship. These aspects are also celebrated through working displays and beautiful murals, such as "The Holy City" and the Mission Statement of being "Good Followers of Jesus". These displays have been created through pupil art workshops. The RE (religious education) Ministers (Year 5 pupils) plan, lead and deliver weekly liturgies based on Christian values, and they train the Year 4 pupils in this role for the following academic year. Traditional prayers and personal prayers are shared daily within collective worship or in class, and intention prayer books in classes are created by the pupils.

The vast majority of pupils respond enthusiastically to their religious education lessons and concentrate well. Where appropriate, pupils are supported by an adult, so they successfully achieve and improve their understanding. Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well because, as one pupil said, "teachers adapt to your way of learning." The teaching styles in each class, whilst varied, motivate and inspire pupils to choose challenging tasks which are differentiated. Pupils achieve age appropriate religious education levels of attainment and many exceed the national expectations. The data for progress for all pupils over the last two years indicates that the majority of pupils in all year groups made at least expected progress, and of those, 50% exceeded attaining expected progress. Predictions for the end of this year are in line with this achievement, so the pace of increased progress for pupils, has been maintained.

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

The headteacher, deputy headteacher / RE leader together with governors and managers are deeply committed to their vision and with inspirational leadership, make a positive and direct impact on the Catholic life of the school. There are excellent home, school, parish links, and a key strength of the school, identified by parents, is the excellent use of communication systems which provide on-going information. Families receive weekly "The Wednesday Word" Christian literature, which offers ideas and activities for parents and their children at home. The HSA (Home School Association) plays a regular part in supporting the school through organised, inclusive and fun events. Parents value the termly parent partnership days and always feel welcomed by staff. The school operates an "open door" policy. One parent mentioned that "the children are inspired to bring home behaviour systems to help their siblings." The spiritual, moral and social characteristics are evident

throughout the school in word and action, and also through vibrant working displays, personal prayer, through collective worship and in the excellent relationships between staff and staff with pupils. The parish priest plays an important role in supporting families and this enhances the Catholic ethos and Church's Mission. Provision for pupils' education for personal relationships through the developmental programme of "a Journey in Love" approved by the diocese, supports pupils in making choices and is linked to Catholic values. There are excellent systems in place to underpin regular and rigorous self-evaluation which supports the school development planning and governors are actively involved in this process. CPD (Continual Professional Development) plays a major part in developing teachers' expertise and this directly impacts on the school's succession planning. Extra CPD will be offered to TAs (teaching assistants) in the future. The headteacher and RE leader meet regularly with other cluster schools and attend diocesan meetings. The Year 6 teacher is also a Pastoral Leader, supporting pupils appropriately when personal issues arise. Pupils in the meeting with the inspector expressed their gratitude for a listening ear. The governors play a distinctive role in supporting the Catholic life of the school, which was an area of development in the last inspection and which has been successfully met.

Leaders, governors and managers consider religious education as a core subject and therefore governors, together with leaders, regularly scrutinise the attainment and progress data, observe RE lessons, conduct learning walks, evaluate collective worship and undertake scrutinies of pupils' workbooks, compiling reports to address outcomes. The RE leader effectively guides and supports staff to deliver quality lessons which have pace, a variety of learning techniques to suit all pupils, and differentiated tasks which offer challenge to all pupils. As standards of attainment have risen, she is now pursuing further ideas to support the more able pupils. All aspects of religious education teaching and learning are monitored rigorously and a clear improvement plan has been devised. Moderation of pupil's assessed work is undertaken within school and through collaboration with the local Catholic partnership schools. Within the diocesan working party, the RE leader has also played a key role in revising the diocesan RE curriculum plan. The religious education budget has been particularly generous in the last academic year to provide appropriate resources to support the curriculum, and is in line with other core subjects. The RE governor who is the parish priest, meets regularly with the senior leaders to discuss outcomes for pupils, further opportunities to enhance their knowledge and understanding of religious education, and participation with other Catholic schools through visits to diocesan events and liturgies.

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

Collective worship, Mass and opportunities for shared prayer are central to the life of the school. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned to create experience of Catholic traditional prayer, worship and celebrations, and these are evaluated by the governors and senior leaders. Opportunities are offered for pupils and parents to share their views. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the sacramental life of the school, and Reconciliation services form a part of the liturgical calendar and worship. The "Year of Mercy" theme is evident in classrooms and in corridors with colourful displays and reflections. During the inspector's visit, collective worship was planned and delivered by the pupil RE Ministers, based on the theme, "Who do people say that I am" said Jesus. This included successful use of power point, together with song, prayer, the gospel reading, reflections and questions for pupils to consider. The request for volunteers to come forward and share their various roles within family and school life, in response to "We are many things to many people," was beautifully delivered, with pupils keen to participate and reverently listen. There was a calm peaceful and prayerful atmosphere throughout. Recently pupils experienced feedback from a Hindu family on their religious celebrations. Parents are

invited to attend liturgies and Masses together with governors. In classrooms the prayer tables are an active resource along with working wall displays of on-going RE themes. Recently a prayer courtyard has been successfully created where pupils enjoy the opportunity to quietly pray, peacefully tend to plants, check the wormery or feed birds.

The teaching of religious education is consistently highly effective in engaging pupils, ensuring that they are gaining knowledge and understanding and challenging ideas and suggestions. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this inspires and motivates pupils to find out more. The inspector met with a few parents, who commented on how their children share at home their understanding of their religious education lessons, and how they are inspired to seek further knowledge from other sources, to then take back into school to share in class. Marking of pupils' work in some classes challenge pupils to think further and evaluate where their learning can lead to, and this needs to be further developed for all classes, so all pupils experience this form of challenging learning both verbally and in written response.

The school's religious education curriculum meets all requirements of the Bishops' Conference. At least 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education in all classes, and at times the percentage is further increased in response to diocesan circumstances and events, as well as opportunities identified within cross-curricular activities. In many classes pupils post views, ideas and reflections on working walls. Other faiths are taught throughout the year, and the rich opportunities provided by the curriculum impacts on the spiritual, moral and social development for all pupils. The quality and quantity of work within pupils workbooks throughout the school evidences excellent use and understanding of religious vocabulary, and in one lesson observation in the Year 1 class where pupils were focussing on "Giving Gifts to God", a pupil when describing how they felt taking up the offertory mentioned that "it makes me think of Jesus and how he shows mercy."

The inspector wishes to thank the headteacher, RE leader, governors, staff, children and parents for their very warm welcome and for contributing to her most enjoyable, informative and interesting visit.



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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

24th June 2016

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St Felix Catholic Primary School

Thank you very much for making me so welcome to your school on Monday 20th June, and thank you to all the pupils who met with me to tell me about your school and how you worship and work together. I was very interested to see you all participate in collective worship, and I enjoyed your gentle and prayerful singing and signing. I was also interested to see you enjoying your RE lessons.

Here are some of the things I especially liked:

- The way you respond to challenges within your RE lessons, work hard and enjoy learning.
- You are very kind and considerate with each other, you listen to each other, and your behaviour is excellent, especially during collective worship.
- The school provides wonderful opportunities for you to develop spiritually, morally and socially as well as academically.
- The Senior leaders, governors and parish priest ensure that you all have the opportunity to grow in faith and wisdom.

I have asked your teachers to consider when marking your work, to offer challenging thoughts and ideas for you to respond to which are linked to your next steps of progress, and I would like the RE ministers to evaluate their presentations in collective worship, and carry on the excellent work that they are already doing.

Thank you again for your friendly welcome and help. I wish you all continuing success in all that you do.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jan Southgate
Diocesan Inspector