



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: St George's Primary School
LEA: Southend-On-Sea Unitary Authority
Inspection Date: 20th June 2017
Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 209
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: May 2012

School Address:
Eagle Way
Shoeburyness
Essex
SS3 9RX

Tel. No. 01702 293522
Headteacher: Mrs A. Delgado
Chair of Governors: Mr F. McEvoy

Information about the school

St George's Catholic Primary School is one form entry in Shoeburyness in the county of Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of St George and The English Martyrs, Shoeburyness from which most pupils come. There are currently 209 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British Heritage with a small number coming from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. Almost 74% of pupils are Catholics with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations, other faiths or none. 66% of the teachers are Catholics and nine have the CCRS or similar qualification. The proportion of pupils with special needs is below the national average. The possibility of forming a multi academy trust with other Catholic schools is being explored.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St George's is a good Catholic school with the potential to become outstanding in all areas. The quality of the prayer and collective worship provided by the school, the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff and the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from its Catholic life are all outstanding. 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. There is regular monitoring of teaching, learning, and assessment. Pastoral care is good and shared by the local parish priest and all staff. Relationships within the school and with the local parish are good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the Catholic life of the school.

St George's has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2014 identified the need for the school to develop its marking policy and to develop a more consistent approach to the quality, quantity, content and presentation of work in religious education workbooks. Both areas have been addressed. Pupils now receive 'next step' marking to help them improve and workbooks are very well presented and show coverage of the curriculum and progress from year to year. The headteacher has a clear vision for future development which is shared with whole school community. The subject leader has produced an action plan to sustain effectiveness and put in place further improvements. Teachers are given guidance on classroom worship which involves pupils in using their own prayers as well as the traditional prayers of the Church. Regular, rigorous monitoring is ensuring that teaching is relevant and appropriate to children's needs.

The quality of self-evaluation is very 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 encouraged to improve their skills through training and embarking on the CCRS course. There are also good links with other diocesan primary schools through in-service sessions and staff meetings.

The current leadership has a very good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows excellent leadership of a Catholic community and is well supported by her assistant headteacher and subject leader. Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise and a good knowledge of the everyday life of the school. Governors visit frequently and are involved in staff appointments as well as liaising with subject leaders. 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

- Continue the development of the assessment process in view of new guidelines.
- Extend the way information about curriculum religious education is communicated to parents by using the school website and other media.

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. Pupils observed during the inspection worked well together and were keen to achieve. They have 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 Key Stage 2 pupils are able to use scripture with confidence. 'Good News' bibles were used in Year 3 to read the parable of 'The Prodigal Son' followed by close observation of copies of Rembrandt's famous painting. Pupils were able to reflect on repentance, reconciliation and God's forgiveness. A Year 4 lesson on 'Building Bridges,' St John's gospel quote, 'No-one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friend' was used to explore the strength of God's love for us. In this lesson pupils enjoyed the practical challenges involved in building their bridges and were able to identify the way scripture encourages us to strengthen relationships and support each other. Across the school workbooks are well presented and show pupils' progress and coverage of the curriculum. Marking is positive and helps pupils make the 'next steps' in their learning.

Pupils make an excellent 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 Cafod, Basildon Women's Refuge, Shoebox Appeal and Mercy in Action. Discussions with pupils showed that they had a good understanding of the work of these charities and are able to link it with the life and teachings of Jesus. All Year 6 pupils are given responsibilities to support the life of the school as ambassadors, school council members, house captains, Year 6 Liturgy team and playground buddies. There are very good links with the local parish with regular school Masses when pupils act as welcomers, altar servers, readers and compose bidding prayers. Year 6 Liturgy team members prepare and set up for Mass in school. The local parish priest provides pastoral support for staff and pupils, comes in frequently and acts as an additional teaching resource. The Rainbows programme and a counsellor from Brentwood Catholic Children's Society are available to help pupils and families who need additional support. There are good links with the wider community through sports and cultural events. Pupils show consideration and respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is very good and pupils value the sense of security, friendship and community created within the school.

Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and readily lead worship in a range of settings including whole school assemblies and class Masses. 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 and meditation. A Liturgy team of Year 6 pupils is involved in the preparation for Masses and assemblies as well as reading scripture and leading prayer. Pupils 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. The Angelus is said each day Key Stage 1 and 2 classes. Preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation is parish based and led by the headteacher. There are opportunities for Reconciliation in Advent and Lent. Pupils are aware of the support available to them and feel safe, cared for and know where to go when they need help. Parents value the care given to their children and the good level of communication with staff. Responses to a questionnaire included many appreciative comments including, 'A wonderful, caring Catholic school where teachers set beautiful examples of living faith for pupils to follow.'

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

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The headteacher demonstrates outstanding leadership of the school through the way she promotes, monitors and evaluates the provision for its Catholic life. She communicates a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and is supported in this by staff and governors who are all committed to providing

the best possible environment for the pupils. Parish links are fostered by holding parish council meetings in school and by inviting parishioners to a range of school events including school and family Masses. The Catholicity of the school is evident in displays around the school and in the classroom prayer areas. During the inspection the headteacher supported by the liturgy team led a thoughtful whole school assembly celebrating Father's Day. She made explicit links to scripture references to God as Father and included Pope Francis, the local parish priest and other father figures in her reflections. The liturgy team acted the parable of 'The Forgiving Father' and led prayers. In conclusion all pupils participated with reverence as they said the 'Our Father.' Singing was excellent.

Many governors have a long standing knowledge and understanding of the school and are well informed about its life through the headteacher's report, learning walks and visits to school events as well as meetings with senior leaders. Along with the headteacher they monitor the school's provision for prayer and worship and religious education. They are skilled in using performance data to evaluate outcomes and progress made by pupils. All governors are invited to join the school for Masses, assemblies and whole school celebrations. The Chair of Governors has been involved with the school and parish for many years and is particularly well placed to monitor current developments. He has a monthly meeting with the headteacher and parish priest when key areas for development are identified. Governors have accessed training provided by the diocese which has enabled them to evaluate aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

The subject leader produces a targeted action plan for religious education each year and is well placed to assist new teachers. Along with the headteacher she monitors religious education through workbook scrutiny, observing teaching and evaluating outcomes. They both give feedback after lesson observations resulting in improvements in teaching and learning. They have led training sessions for staff to help them ensure that all pupils achieve well through differentiated tasks. New staff are given extra support to embed their knowledge of the curriculum and the assessment criteria. The subject leader has initiated the 'Big Question' to support assessment and is currently exploring additional ways to enable pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of relevant concepts. She attends diocesan training to keep abreast of new initiatives which will need to be implemented across the school. Leaders support staff development and teachers are encouraged to undertake further diocesan training.

School leaders ensure that St George'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 good links with other diocesan schools including the Catholic secondary schools to which some pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2. Provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings, weekly newsletters and their views are sought by means of questionnaires. Parents are positive about the provision for religious education although some would like more information about the content of the curriculum.

Provision

Grade 2

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or better. Pupils are given a good 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. All groups of pupils make good progress and behaviour for learning is also good. Teaching strategies are imaginative and are effective in capturing pupils' enthusiasm and interest. Current events were referred to in a Year 6 lesson on 'Healing' when a pupil's prayer asked that God 'would get into the hearts and minds of terrorists.' Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding. Staff new to the school are well supported by leadership. Differentiated tasks enable pupils to achieve well and effective support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive and there are 'next steps' comments and suggestions of ways to improve. There is much evidence to indicate that current good standards are likely to be further improved.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is good. 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 relationships education. Parents are consulted on

aspects of this provision. The school has invested in good quality resources including class sets of Bibles which are used to give pupils regular access to scripture. Other faiths are taught well and enhanced by speakers who share their culture and visits to a mosque and synagogue. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the importance of faith to the work of the community. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development.

Provision for prayer and worship at St George's is outstanding. 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 includes key vocabulary and 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 and pupils visit the local church for feast days. Year 3 pupils attend a diocesan day to celebrate First Holy Communion and Year 6 pupils attend a deanery Mass at a local Catholic secondary school. The parish priest supports the school through Masses, attending assemblies and classroom visits. Pupils have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.

The school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. The subject leader is reviewing assessment procedures to prepare the school for changes envisaged later in the year. Tracking of pupils' progress is providing a clear picture of progress in both key stages. There is evidence that good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current good or outstanding 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.