

Report of the Denominational (Canon 806 & Section 48)
Inspection of
(Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School

DfE No: 926/3376
URN: 142730

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Stephen Thomson

Headteacher: Rachel Swindell

Denominational Inspector: Jan Southgate

Dates of Inspection: 3rd May 2018

Date and grade of previous inspection: March 2012 Grade 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School, situated in what was once the village of Old Costessey and now part of the outskirts of Norwich, is an expanding school which will reach its full one and a half form entry capacity in 2021. The school currently has 287 pupils on role (including a Nursery) and 71% pupils are Catholic. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady and St. Walstan's and the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. 48% of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and low percentages (5%) of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 6% of pupils have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). Of the staff, 26% are Catholic and one teacher has the RE qualification Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

St. Augustine's school is a good school which has a vision through challenging yet achievable strategic plans, to achieve its improvement targets within an appropriate timescale, to move forward with pace and commitment. There have been recent changes in leadership and staffing as well as the expansion of the school and joining St. John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) in 2016. The mission statement permeates the Catholic life and ethos of the school "We try to follow Jesus by loving each other and caring for God's world" as seen in the pupils' excellent supportive behaviour and respect towards each other as well as caring for the natural world, evidenced as pupils regularly checked the hatching of young chicks. Staff members are very good examples of consistent and caring role models for the pupils and to each other. Parents speak very highly of the friendly, approachable and understanding manner of staff and they value the openness and honesty they receive. A parent explained, "this is why our children feel so happy and safe in the school." The new head of school appointed in 2017 has made a great impact on the school community, not only with the self-evaluation process in securing improvements, but also in the strong family values both in school and out of school time, through offering her support and interest at family celebrations and within events at Church. The parish priest also works closely with the headteacher and the school, which impacts on pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education (RE) and creates very strong home, school, parish links. This caring communication directly impacts on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and with the strong leadership, drives the Catholic vision of the school.

Grade 2

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Address the issue of a decrease in pupil attainment and progress in RE from the end of KS1 to KS2, through planned, regular whole staff RE workbook scrutiny, the continuation of learning walks, lesson observations and shared termly focus on assessment and standards.
- Ensure there are opportunities for pupil's self-evaluation in written work, through responses to the teachers' questions posed and, where appropriate, teachers offer extended opportunities for further analysis and depth of understanding for more able pupils.
- To create consistency within pupils' self-evaluation, by ensuring that all teaching staff adhere to the new marking policy, and with the introduction of pupil 'I can' statements, that pupils know their next steps of learning.
- Across the school, at an age appropriate level, provide more opportunities for pupils to experience planning, preparing and delivering collective worship.
- Plan opportunities for governors to monitor formally with the RE leader and liturgy leader, outcomes for pupils in preparing collective worship.

CATHOLIC LIFE:

Grade 2

Pupils are extremely proud of their school community. They enjoy the celebration of Mass and the responsibilities given to them to read, lead prayer, altar serve and prepare the altar in readiness for the celebration. The parish priest regularly visits the school, and as one pupil stated, "he is part of our family". Staff are excellent role models for pupils and the vast majority of pupils support their peers in contributing to the thriving Catholic ethos. There is a great community spirit which reaches out to the wider community who are regularly invited to events within school or, as with the elderly members of the community, the pupils visit for individual chats. Pupils show great respect to everyone and are a credit to the school, as mentioned when they attend events. Pupils relish the opportunities given to raise money for charities and parents willingly support these ventures. Pupils also enjoy participating in events organised for a number of schools to come together. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils were taking part in the "Big Sing" event in Norwich on the morning of the inspection. Colourful displays throughout the school together with a quiet indoor area for prayer and quiet reflection for individual or groups of pupils, show how the ethos is firmly embedded in supporting the Catholic life of the school. Pupils also value knowing and understanding more about other world faiths. A pupil remarked, when asked about their faith, that, "it is important that we always love and forgive each other in our lives."

The school's mission statement is lived out daily and permeates all aspects of the curriculum. The pupils are also excited about creating a motto which will be part of their everyday language in supporting the mission of the school and one that is created by the stakeholders as part of their inclusion of the multi academy trust. Growth Mindset has also been introduced into the school recently and is beginning to be embedded to support pupils' confidence in learning and to 'have a go' even if they are unsure. The school demonstrates a high level of pastoral care for the whole community, and new parents remarked on how effectively the school not only welcomes new pupils, but actively checks with parents to ensure that there has been a smooth transition. A distinct and powerful message is lived out whereby all staff participate in the Mass and collective worship and show how they value the power of prayer. Personal, social, health education (PSHE) and Relations and Sex Education (RSE) are included within the RE curriculum, thus sharing and living out the values of the Gospels and the teachings of the Church. The school has a Catholic family support worker, shared within the CMAT, to support nurture groups and offer counselling to individuals, where appropriate.

The governors are very involved in the Catholic life of the school, accompanying visits, attending school services and supporting the senior leaders with the planning and provision of religious education. They fully support the school in providing and seeking further enrichment and spiritual experiences for all pupils to impact on their learning and personal development as they progress through the school. The school improvement and development plan (SIDP) is shared with governors and scrutinised half termly, and leaders and governors promote continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff as well as ensure that new staff are fully supported and grow in confidence to then share and promote the vision and ethos of the school. Staff receive a handbook when joining the school, and staff in a meeting remarked that they "feel valued and well supported". Senior leaders and governors ensure that all stakeholders within the community receive regular communication, and parents at a meeting remarked on the excellent communication and the value of the time shared within parent consultation evenings. A new initiative to further enrich the Catholic life of the school will be the introduction of 'Parent Cafes'. The governors are very aware of diocesan policies and initiatives and fully support the overall vision for the collective group of faith schools within the CMAT.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Grade 2

Most pupils state that they enjoy their religious education (RE) lessons and take pride in seeing their thoughts and ideas used at the prayer tables and in displays. A few pupils also stated that they would happily try new challenges and different tasks. As seen during the inspection, Nursery, Early Years and Key Stage 1 (KS1) classes provide opportunities for pupils to learn through open RE activities and in Early Years, pupils were offered a variety of tactile activities based on "Love in our Hearts" linked to the Ascension. In KS1 most differentiation was by outcome to the learning objective and pupils produced reflective written thoughts, which were shared with the rest of the class. The quality and quantity of work in KS1 pupils' workbooks is excellent with clear use of age appropriate religious vocabulary, with teachers providing opportunities for pupils to respond to questions from their independent writing, in line with the new marking policy. Although lower Key Stage 2 (KS2) pupils were out of school participating in the 'Big Sing' event in Norwich, scrutiny of the pupils' RE workbooks evidenced embedding of the marking policy, to offer pupils further thoughts from their detailed recounts, reflective thoughts and responses to scripture. The pupils' large RE workbooks are effectively used to offer further learning opportunities, including artistic responses to enhance creative writing and space for teachers to give feedback to pupils and for pupils to respond. The RE leader has identified the need for these workbooks to be used throughout the whole school in RE lessons, to raise the expectation of quality and quantity of work from all pupils. Assessing and moderating pupils' work using the new marking policy in every class, will support measures to raise attainment and progress of pupils' learning in religious education.

In Early Years and KS1, lessons were well paced, interactive, lively and supported by appropriate resources including good use of the interactive whiteboard to give a clear understanding of the learning objective. Nursery and Early Years 'RE Class Books' evidence pupils thoughts and feelings, with teachers' comments and photos of role play and displays showing RE in action. In KS2 the lessons observed were teacher led but a faster pace and involvement for all pupils would have enhanced their learning, for example, "buzz" moments when peers could have challenged each other's views and opinions. However, a number of pupils articulated their reflective thoughts with very good use of religious vocabulary and pupils stayed on task, showing their respectful behaviour. The head of school as RE leader has identified the need for the teaching of religious education in upper KS2 to include differentiated tasks which would support pupils' self- challenge and for tasks to highlight key driver words related to the curriculum themes within collaborative and independent learning. Appropriate use of driver words in pupils' written work would clearly show the level of religious vocabulary pupils' have and this would also impact on their progress and attainment in religious education. The senior leaders have plans to use "Big Questions" which will provide deeper learning opportunities throughout the school, and for teachers to observe each other so good practice is shared and becomes more consistent throughout the school. With the new RE national standards and assessment framework being introduced and embedded, planned regular staff meetings and CPD as identified in the RE Action Plan and SIDP is taking place to support staff in moving the school forward.

The new head of school having taken on the role of RE leader is fully supported by the assistant headteacher and governors, to ensure appropriate measures are taken in securing improvements for pupils in attainment and progress. The challenging but achievable targets will soon bring RE back in line with the other core subjects. Whilst the commitment to 10% of the teaching week is dedicated to religious education as seen in almost all of the weekly class timetable planning, it may be beneficial for RE sessions in some year groups to be no longer than one hour, so pupils have the opportunity to revisit themes throughout the week which can further extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

Grade 2

At St. Augustine's school, collective worship is regarded as central to the development of the spiritual and prayerful life of the school community. It is clearly an inclusive and spiritual experience for all. Almost all pupils and staff engage fully in opportunities for collective worship with adults and older pupils being effective role models for younger pupils. An assembly at the start of the day, planned by the liturgy leader, demonstrated pupils' reverent and prayerful participation in all aspects of the worship. Pupils were observed joining in with collective prayer and age appropriate choices of hymn singing including a lively Gospel greeting. Younger pupils added signs and actions to one of the hymns with enthusiasm. All pupils were attentive and reflective during the dramatisation of the Gospel reading where the older pupils confidently and reverently portrayed the story of the Ascension. Pupils from all phases deliver worship regularly with some degree of independence. Pupils clearly enjoy this responsibility and the school has identified plans to further develop leadership opportunities for planning and leading liturgy alongside the liturgy leader and music director. It was evident that in most classes there are opportunities for pupils to write their own thoughtful prayers and petitions to be shared during reflections, leading to the development of their identity as a prayerful community. Some pupils take the opportunity for quiet prayer in the dedicated prayer area showing that pupils are aware of a variety of approaches to prayer and the ways it supports their growing faith and personal development.

Sacramental opportunities and praying together is an important part of the daily enrichment of the faith journey for all pupils and staff. The head of school, having recently appointed the liturgy leader and a music director, has plans for a growing involvement for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate their roles in providing collective worship. One aspect is to introduce training for pupils to become 'Mini Vinnies'. The themes chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school. The beautiful singing of the pupils adds to the prayerful interaction and staff have become more confident in supporting pupils with the planning of assemblies and themes related to the RE curriculum. The parish priest actively encourages many of the pupils to support worship not only in school, but also regularly within the parish. This greatly enhances the pupils' learning and understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and why the Mass is so important in the faith journey of each individual. The school engages effectively with parents, the parish and the wider community including other local faith communities, and pupils clearly enjoy these opportunities, as one pupil said, "we get to meet many people who are special, like the Jewish people, when they tell us about their faith".

The head of school / RE leader, together with the new liturgy leader and music director, have begun to develop monitoring and evaluating processes for collective worship, and along with the RE governor, recognises the value for governors to become more aware of more formal observations as roles and responsibilities change with more pupils taking on, with the support of their teachers, an active role in leading this aspect of Catholic life. One example, which inspired pupils with their celebrations included the support of the diocesan "Ignite" team who visit many of the diocesan schools to promote and impact on faith worship. As one pupil mentioned, "Ignite makes 'it' all come alive and it is very exciting!"

The diocesan inspector together with the "shadow" inspector wish to thank the head of school, staff, pupils, governors and the whole school community for their very warm and friendly welcome and their valuable input into the life of St. Augustine's school.



EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

11th May 2018

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Thank you very much for making Mrs Stewart and I so welcome to your school on Thursday 3rd May, and thank you to the pupils who met with us to give your views about your school. We were very interested to hear how you work together. We both enjoyed the prayerful and thoughtful collective worship given by Year 6 and we enjoyed seeing you working in your lessons.

Here are some of the things we especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school that provides many opportunities for a wide range of prayer and worship activities.
- You are very caring and considerate with each other, you listen to each other, your behaviour is excellent and you are well cared for by your teachers.
- The school provides good opportunities for you to develop personally, spiritually and morally.
- In your Religious Education (RE) lessons you are keen to participate and enjoy learning.

We have asked your teachers to consider giving you a next steps in progress sheet to put in your RE workbooks which has "I Can" targets for you to achieve, so you know how well you are learning. We would also like your teachers to regularly monitor your workbooks to see if you are making good progress and attainment in your RE lessons and we have also suggested that Year 6 train other pupils in planning and leading prayer and worship celebrations.

Thank you again for your friendly welcome and help. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jan Southgate
Diocesan Inspector

Mrs Margaret Stewart
Diocesan Inspector