

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

St Martha's Catholic Primary School

Field Lane, Gaywood
King's Lynn, PE30 4AY

DfES No: 926 3395
URN: 121139

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mrs MacLachlan

Headteacher: Mr A. McGovern

Denominational Inspector:

Mrs M. Betts

Dates of Inspection: 15th July 2011

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DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Martha Catholic School is an average size primary school for pupils from 4 to 11 years. The school serves the deanery of St Wilfrid with some pupils travelling up to 15 miles to attend. The number of pupils has risen during the last few years. There are now 209 pupils on roll, 80% of whom are Catholic. Nearly half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with a quarter speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is below the national average.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade 2

St Martha's School is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. The extremely strong Catholic identity permeates the school's daily life. The committed leadership of the headteacher is instrumental in inspiring a strong spiritual purpose throughout the school and in providing a wealth of extra Catholic experiences for all the children. This very effectively promotes the pupils' personal development and faith awareness which reflects in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Relationships within the school are very good and reflect Christian love and concern for others. Pupils recognise that the school's inclusion of children from a range of cultural backgrounds, is a strength of the school. Pupils are very proud of their school describing it as a place where "we all love and care for each other". Prayer and worship are of pivotal importance in the school's life. Religious education (RE) has a high profile and a good standard is achieved by pupils. The pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

The headteacher and assistant head have a good overall view of the school's strengths and development needs gained through regular monitoring of worship and religious education. The development issues from the last inspection have been mostly achieved and the school has continued to improve. The school regularly seeks the views of staff, parents and pupils. All staff are committed to the success of the school and are willing to improve their skills through training opportunities. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Embed the additional RE material within the current programme to offer a more supporting and broader syllabus.
- To further develop RE assessment by linking achievement with future planning so that pupils are challenged to achieve their next attainment level.
- Ensure consistency of RE marking throughout the school so that pupils know how to improve their work and have opportunities to make these improvements.

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

Grade 1

The extent to which pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils value being part of this Catholic community particularly when they come together for achievement assembly. They display respect towards each other and to adults. The pupils work to achieve their full potential both academically and in their gifts and talents. They appreciate the wealth of learning and experience opportunities provided which builds their confidence. Pupils praise the friendly, fair, caring attitude of the teachers who help with any

problems. They undertake responsibilities and show concern for others especially younger children to whom they act as buddies. Pupils' achievements are recognised, praised and valued. Their ideas are sought and taken into account through the School Council. Through the Eco-Council pupils show a concern for their environment and its wildlife. The school strongly promotes the well-being of pupils with a vast range of different needs.

Pupils respond very well to the school's prayer and worship life. They participate with respect, and understand the importance of prayer explaining that it helps them gain support for difficulties in their lives. Pupils create their own prayers and in one RE lesson they were composing their thoughts to Mary and why she holds a special place in their hearts. Most pupils enjoy worship especially class and achievement assemblies. Pupils respond sensitively to worship, for example during year 6 Mass at Red Mount chapel they were reverent despite the small worship space. Pupils' participation through high quality singing greatly enhances the experience. The children spoke of singing as a really enjoyable part of any assembly. Worship engages and stimulates pupils. They appreciate that the theme is relevant to their daily life. Worship contributes extremely well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Pupils are gaining religious literacy at a good rate. They achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed this. They are developing a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith and traditions. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially those linked to practical activities and illustrating work. Pupils have a positive attitude to RE learning and work together very well. Their spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The pupils' RE 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 is deeply committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. He communicates a clear vision for the Catholic ethos which inspires all in the school community. The mission statement pervades all the activities and work of the school. Attractive displays around school contributed by children, confirm the Catholic identity. Leadership promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very well. The school provides an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities ranging from unusual sports for example archery to leading the mens' international hockey team onto the pitch preceding a match. The school also offers many varied opportunities for pupils to experience the Catholic traditions, examples being taking part in a pilgrimage and in many different liturgical processions. The school leadership promotes well the spiritual development of all the staff. The school has very good links with parents who appreciate the work of the school. It has strong links with the parish through the close involvement of the parish priest and parishioners with the school. There are further links with other parishes in the deanery. The pupils' work and current learning topics are displayed in the adjoining church.

The religious education co-ordinator, with strong support from the headteacher and curriculum leader, ensures this subject has a high profile across the school. A clear direction for improvement has been set. Religious education is monitored regularly and formal feedback provided to the staff. Support and guidance by more experienced Catholic staff is promoted. Teachers' performance management objectives support the school's Catholic ethos. The budget provided is generous and in line with that given to other core subjects. Religious education is well resourced. Five teachers hold the CCRS (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies) qualification.

Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are supportive and well informed about the work and monitoring outcomes of the school through the headteacher's report. Governors visit the school regularly, monitor the creative curriculum including RE and feedback to the rest of the governing body. They have appropriate skills and experience to challenge the school.

The school is a very welcoming and inclusive community where all members are respected and valued. Non-Catholic pupils are fully involved in the school's life. Pupils and their families from different cultures are respected and celebrated and this diversity is recognised by pupils as a real advantage to their school community. Pupils show compassion for others by their fund-raising for local, national and international charities. The school invites members of the local community to share their expertise. Pupils have a good liaison with the parish elders. They contribute to the local community especially through the school choir singing at many local occasions. Provision for spiritual development effectively provides opportunities for pupils to link the learning with their own experiences. The school participates with parishioners and parents to share celebrations and other events. Pupils learn about other world faiths. Families and children from other religions contribute to the learning.

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

Worship, prayer and sacramental celebration are integral to the life of the school community and all staff attend. Collective worship provision is appropriate for pupils' ages, and gives opportunities to be involved in Mass, prayer, liturgy and worship in a variety of different groups and settings from the intimate Red Mount chapel to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Worship is well planned using visual presentations, bible and other stories, drama, and music to promote pupils' interest and develop their thinking. A quiet calm reflective atmosphere is created. Worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The attractive prayer tables in each classroom provide a clear focus. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the sacramental life of the school and provides an opportunity for individual confession for the older children. Provision for this was a development issue from the last inspection. Opportunity to pray the Rosary is given during May and October. Pupils regularly contribute to mid-week Mass at church.

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good with some outstanding features being observed. Teachers' knowledge is sound and they plan well with clear learning objectives made explicit to the pupils. Visual presentations and open questioning are effectively used to gain pupils' interest and develop their learning. One lesson used pictures of sacred pilgrimage sites to inspire pupils' curiosity to discover more about the place for themselves. The tasks planned strongly consolidate the learning, an example being the children using bibles to discover the variety of Jesus' activities while he was in Jerusalem. One lesson ended very well with reflection time accompanied by appropriate music.

Assessment of key RE skills feed well into the whole school assessment programme. RE levels of attainment are recorded and can be tracked. RE pupil targets are set and pupils are aware of these. All work is well marked giving appropriate praise, comments and stamps to convey how closely the learning objective has been achieved. In one class pupils were led to improve their work but this practice is inconsistent throughout the school.

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the "Here I Am" programme with additional work linked to the liturgical year. It is planned to incorporate supplementary material to support the programme. Scripture is used well during teaching. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the

demands of religious commitment. Religious education is linked to other curriculum areas particularly to information and communication technology (ICT). Other faiths are studied. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Attractive religious education displays around school give added value to this core subject.

The inspector wishes to thank the headteacher, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to her very enjoyable and interesting visit.

EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the diocesan inspection.

20th July 2011

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St Martha'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 year 5. I was very interested in your views of your school. I enjoyed being present at Year 2 and Year 5 Religious Education lessons. It was a great privilege for me to be present for your Friday morning celebration assembly and to hear of your achievements. Thank you Year 6 for inviting me to attend your Leavers' Mass at Red Mount chapel. Well done to everyone involved.

Here are some of the things I especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school that provides many opportunities for prayer, worship and Mass.
- You are friendly and considerate to each other and are well cared for by your teachers.
- The school provides very good opportunities and extra experiences for you to develop personally, spiritually and morally.

I have asked your teachers to consider when they are planning your lessons to check that you are taught skills and knowledge needed to achieve the next RE level. I have also asked them to show you when they are marking your work what improvements you could make and give you time to make these improvements. I hope you enjoy the new RE materials that your school plans to use next year.

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

Yours sincerely

Mrs M. Betts
Diocesan Inspector