

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

***St Mary's Catholic Primary School***

DfE No: 935/3340

URN: 145382

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Ms Clare Gleave

Headteacher: Mrs Jill Sandvig

Denominational Inspector: Mrs Marion Betts

Date of Inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Date and grade of previous inspection: 26th January 2012 Grade 1

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry school for pupils from 4 to 11 years. There are 211 pupils on roll, 93% of whom are Catholic. 41% of teachers are Catholic. The majority of pupils come from the parish of St Mary's. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school receives pupils from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, with just over a third speaking English as an additional language. Four months ago the school joined the newly formed Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL** **Grade 2: Good**

St Mary's school is a good school which is moving forward at a fast rate to develop even further its Catholic life and religious education. It has a very strong Catholic ethos with dedicated leadership from the deputy, headteacher and governors. Relationships and respect between all staff and pupils are very good and demonstrate the school's Catholic ethos along with the Gospel values of concern and respect for others. One pupil explained "we are all friends here and get along well with each other". Worship and prayer are central in the school's life with pupils being offered a richness of worship, prayer and reflection experiences. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils and staff are proud of their school and feel valued, respected and listened to. Religious education (RE) has a high profile and is led by an enthusiastic and dedicated leader. Pupils make steady progress in this subject throughout their school life and are becoming aware of how to live out their faith within their daily lives. The quality of pupil's RE learning is also reflected in their creative art work.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further?**

- Develop moderation of the school's RE assessment by undertaking this with the other schools within the Trust so that teachers can ensure a more objective approach to their pupils' attainment judgements.
- Expand the membership of the Worship Council and so extend the opportunities given for pupil involvement with preparing, planning and presenting class acts of worship.

## **CATHOLIC LIFE:**

### **Grade 1: Outstanding**

Pupils benefit very well from the school's Catholic ethos. Their growing awareness of their Catholic faith is very effectively fostered as is their understanding of how to live this out in their lives by following the example of Jesus. This is reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year. They are confident, reflective and thoughtful when discussing their beliefs. Relationships within the school community are very good and all feel valued. Any particular needs they may have are catered for extremely well. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities especially as members of the Worship Council and Play Leaders. Pupils praise their teachers who listen to them, help solve their problems and give encouragement and support in their learning. Pupils show an understanding of the need to forgive and accept forgiveness so leading to reconciliation and pupils mentioned this in relation to the behaviour expectations of the school. Their achievements are recognised and celebrated.

Pupils enjoy and benefit from the many extra Catholic activities and visits provided and their intrinsic involvement in the parish.

The school mission statement is clear and lived out by staff and pupils. It was encapsulated last year within the whole school over-riding theme of "We are One". The diversity of pupils' cultures is celebrated and on "Filipino Day" parents and their children along with the teachers presented traditional stories, food and art. Pupils are proud of their school and strive to show this year's theme of "Time to Shine" in their individual achievements and everyday actions. Their personal and collective worth is valued and emphasised throughout the school curriculum. Pupils support many local and global charities and often plan and organise activities to raise money. They contribute money to their twinned parish in Cambodia, and recently ran a "Rainforest Café" to buy bicycles. Pupils also make talking books for the children there to learn English. The school provides regular opportunities for the spiritual development of adults and demonstrates compassionate support when dealing with the personal needs of staff and families. Pastoral support for pupils' special needs is very good with the provision, staffing and nurture activities of the "Hive" centre and within the new sensory room which provides a calm relaxing atmosphere for pupils when needed.

The strong Catholic identity permeates the school's daily life and environment. A clear powerful vision is effectively demonstrated by the school's drive for continuous improvement to increase the richness of pupils' Catholic life experiences and also for the pupils to achieve their full educational potential. The leadership know the school's major strengths and inspire staff to take on board well-targeted and planned developments. Training opportunities are encouraged and the school looks forward to increasing the range of these through the Trust. Governors are kept informed as to the progress of the new initiatives in the school and many visit regularly. Links with the parish are extremely strong, especially through the extensive, regular and extremely supportive involvement in school life, worship and RE of the parish priest. Parents are very positive about all the school achieves for their children and particularly mentioned the approachability of all the staff.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE):**

**Grade 2: Good**

Pupils make good progress in RE and the majority achieve the expected outcomes with some achieving higher than expected. They are developing a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding effectively when reflecting spiritually about what they have been taught, translating the learning into their own religious commitment in everyday life. When the older pupils were discussing the difference between trusting Jesus compared to their favourite superstar, they demonstrated a mature depth of thought. Pupils are able to comment and reflect on Scripture passages such as when they were describing the Resurrection before attempting to reproduce this as a drama. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when given practical and creative tasks to motivate and consolidate their learning. They also appreciate the opportunities to discuss their own ideas and opinions with others and when doing this they demonstrate their confidence in their beliefs. Pupils identify RE as an important subject and their RE books are well presented and evidence a variety of written work.

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good with outstanding features observed. Where RE lessons were best, there were clear learning objectives; pupils were motivated to learn by visual demonstrations and practical and creative activities; talking partners ensured thoughtful reflection; and key vocabulary was used well and regularly to reinforce the learning. A brisk pace and challenging questioning also promoted maximum learning. Scripture was used well to illustrate and inspire the learning. New RE pupil assessment records linked to each topic will be used to inform pupils how well they are

achieving. Marking of work gave appropriate praise but only occasionally were pupils encouraged to extend their learning. Differentiation was observed by outcome and extra adult help was used well for pupils who needed this support.

The religious education leader works closely with the deputy headteacher to ensure this subject has a high profile across 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 Catholic Curriculum Directory. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following the diocesan directed programme which includes other faith studies. Visitors are used as an extra resource for this learning. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Religious education is often linked to other curriculum areas particularly to literacy, drama, song and art. RE is appropriately monitored by the RE governor and senior leaders through lesson observations, planning and book scrutinies. The self-evaluation document evidences the school's strengths and appropriate areas for improvement. The RE leader has undertaken training and provides firm support and guidance to the staff. RE is well resourced and the budget is in line with that given to other core subjects. Pupils are assessed regularly with moderation within the school and RE progress tracked. The school plans in future to undertake moderation together with other schools in the Trust. Governors receive reports concerning the RE curriculum, and the RE governor has observed lessons. They regularly monitor the School Development Plan to ensure progress takes place. Staff are committed to the high profile given to RE and the school encourages and supports them to undertake any relevant training.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**

**Grade 2: Good**

Worship, Prayer and pupils' sacramental life has a high profile within school and all pupils respond well, participating respectfully and with ease. Worship contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils enjoy worship especially when visual material and drama is used to enhance the message. They enjoy the discussions created within class worship times. Their high quality of singing enriches the experience. All age appropriate pupils participate in Masses by singing, reading, playing instruments, and serving. The Worship Council plan, prepare and present worship often devising thoughtful power point visual material. The school plans that more pupils will be engaged in this activity in the future. Pupils are involved in planning displays for use in worship connected to the liturgical year such as devising their own Stations of the Cross. Pupils know many set prayers and have written prayers for class prayer books and as part of their RE learning. They frequently pray using a variety of other languages. Recently a whole school day was devoted to learning more about different prayers and each year group investigated a prayer relative to their age. The day resulted in a very successful feedback assembly when children presented their learning to the others.

The school provides a broad richness of prayer, sacraments and worship linking to Catholic traditions with added experiences outside school such as pilgrimages, Mass in the deanery and at the Cathedral, Rosary club and reflection days. The daily themes chosen for worship and the messages delivered reflect the school values and its Catholic character with its overriding commitment this year of "Time to Shine". A memorable morning class prayer session linked the signs of Spring appearing that the pupils had noticed with Jesus' Resurrection and for both, praise Alleluias were enthusiastically chorused. Pupils experience a range of worship leaders including invited groups and hence attend many different worship styles. The music teacher is pro-active in preparing the music and the songs relevant to the forthcoming worship and celebration. The parish priest makes a highly significant contribution to pupils' sacramental worship. Attractive holy tables and classroom symbols

effectively provide the focus for class prayer at significant times in the school day. Pupils speak positively of their worship experiences.

The senior staff and parish priest support and guide teachers to lead worship and prepare for Masses and celebrations, and to ensure quality delivery and age-appropriateness for pupils. Often themes take their inspiration from Gospel teachings and are delivered in an accessible manner. There is a comprehensively planned programme of assemblies, liturgies and Masses which is regularly reviewed. Worship is monitored by leaders and governors and recently pupils evaluated the experiences. Their overwhelming response was very positive. Parents are invited to many celebrations and class Masses and attendance is generally good.



## **EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE**

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### **Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection**

18<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Dear Pupils

#### **Diocesan Inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. Thank you to all those pupils who spoke to me. I was very interested in your views of your school. I enjoyed being present at your assembly and at most class' Religious Education lessons. 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 a wide range of prayer and worship activities.
- You are friendly and considerate 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.
- Teachers often offer creative and thought-provoking RE tasks and activities that leads you to really enjoy the learning.

After the excellent example from the Worship Council children, of planning and presenting worship, I have asked your teachers to consider giving more older children opportunities to plan and lead in small groups their class worship sessions. Also I have asked your teachers to share your RE work with teachers from other schools so that they are sure that their expectations for your attainments at the end of the year, are in line with that expected at other schools.

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

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marion Betts  
Diocesan Inspector