

**Report of the Denominational (Canon 806 & Section 48)
Inspection of**

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

**St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Bungay,
Suffolk, NR35 1AY**

DfE No: 935/2116

URN: 142770

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mrs Mary Sparrow

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Sam Barlow

Denominational Inspectors:
Mrs Margaret Stewart and Mrs Jan Southgate

Dates of Inspection: 17th May 2022

Date and grade of previous inspection: November 2012. Grade 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St. Edmund's Catholic primary school is located in the centre of the market town of Bungay, Suffolk and it is federated with St. Benet's Catholic primary in Beccles to form the Catholic Primary Schools of the Waveney Valley. The two schools are also part of the St. John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT). The school serves the parish of St. Edmund's Catholic Church which is located next door.

There are 89 pupils currently on roll who are taught in 4 classes 3 of which are mixed year groups, consisting of early years, key stage one, lower key stage two and upper key stage two. 24% of pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and 27% are eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) funding.

17% of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs or disability (SEND) and there are no pupils supported by an educational health care plan (EHCP).

Pupils are predominantly White British with Catholic pupils standing at 23%, 28% from other Christian denominations and 3% from other World Faiths. The percentage of Catholic teachers is 50% and the executive headteacher oversees the leadership and management of both schools supported by an assistant headteacher.

Provision during COVID 19 Pandemic

During the pandemic the Federation ensured that provision for all aspects of Religious Education could be embraced by the pupils in school and learning remotely. Great care was established to give appropriate quality provision to all groups of children, so the whole school community was effectively supported and communicated with. The senior leadership team (SLT) tirelessly ensured that national guidance and regulations, along with the CMAT directives were adhered to and modified during changes as the lockdown existed and then gradually lifted. As well as teachers planning and designing creative lessons from the RE themes, they used a combination of live lessons, Loom recordings and work set on Google Classroom, Dojo and Tapestry depending on the year groups to engage learners in all subjects and for RE. In some cases, where needed, small groups and 1:1 sessions also took place. Ignite 'Third Thursday' assemblies, diocesan virtual Masses and national CAFOD assemblies were also made available to families. As part of the school's mission, support continued for the Harvest Foodbank collection along with toiletry and food collections, which gave pupils purpose and a sense of still reaching out to others. In RE, spiritual journeying created a means to engage with scripture and be reflective, as well as teachers providing quality RE learning with aspects of role play, film clips, audio clips, art and music providing the pupils with an inspiring, broad and balanced RE curriculum. Prayer and sacramental opportunities were in place for pupils and their families to engage in, including the use of the "Pebbles" resources for Holy Week, RE newsletters from Ten Ten with prayers to focus on at home and collective worship opportunities. With all the changes and adaptations that took place where and when needed, what remained an outstanding strength of the federation was the strong and effective commitment to pastoral care for the whole school community, including home visits and the constant reviewing of care for the wellbeing of all. "As a school community we feel that we can look back on this period of time and be proud of how we served our school community; we were there for everyone when it mattered" and this well-established care and commitment to well-being continues to be evidenced and appreciated.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade 2

St. Edmund's Catholic primary school is a good school with outstanding features. It is a school where everyone is respected and cherished for who they are and for their unique gifts and talents. The strong and visionary leadership of the executive headteacher and governors across the federation with St. Benet's Catholic primary in Beccles is outstanding. This has led to sustained and often ambitious improvements across the school since the last inspection. The identification of future improvements are clearly planned for in the RE action plan and all stakeholders are involved in monitoring and evaluating their impact. Leaders are supported by a dedicated team of teachers and support staff who are highly committed to promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school and who embrace the joys and challenges of living and working in a Catholic school community. Parents highly value the school and the support it gives to them as families, especially in recent times. 'My children are very happy and feel proud to be at St. Edmund's' stated one parent. They feel well communicated with on matters regarding Catholic life, religious education and collective worship 'The weekly newsletters are outstanding, the Christian messages are always life-giving and faith sustaining'. Provision for pupils' pastoral, spiritual and moral development is clearly evident and are vibrant features of the school. Pupils demonstrate great pride in belonging to St. Edmund's school and all the opportunities it offers them to become active Christians now and in the future. They feel comfortable talking about their faith, praying together and celebrating the Catholic traditions of the school. They also enjoy the roles of responsibility offered and feel their ideas and suggestions are heard and valued. Links with St. Edmund's parish and St. Benet's school are continually strengthened and nurtured leading to a thriving and supportive community for all.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

Catholic Life

- For the federation of St. Edmund's and St. Benet's to review the school's mission statement and agree a short, memorable, child friendly mission statement unique to each school, created with the input of all stakeholders, which reflects its own charism and ethos, and for this to be clearly owned and visible to all.
- For inspiring CPD to have an impact on the commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and that everyone in the school community has sustained opportunities to put their faith into action.

Religious Education

- To improve outcomes for pupils in RE, including those with SEND, by embedding effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies such as the peer coaching model and to include enquiry-based learning for deepening understanding of vocabulary and extending writing opportunities.
- To develop more holistic ways of capturing greater depth to inform judgements, including for pupils with SEND and to consider deeper responses to questioning.
- To develop peer and self-assessment strategies so that pupils can make considered decisions about their next steps in learning.

Collective Worship

- For pupils to develop independence in planning and delivering class based and whole school liturgies and have a greater understanding of the roles of ministry.

CATHOLIC LIFE:

Grade 2

Pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school in the way they actively and freely participate in serving the school, the community and beyond. The work of the Minnie Vinnies and the school council plan and organise regular fundraising events to support CAFOD and other chosen charities. Reaching out to support and make links with others within the parish and those in local care homes demonstrates a good understanding of the responsibility of belonging to a Catholic school community. There is a clear commitment to Catholic Social Teaching; working to achieve the 'Live Simply Award' and sharing the 'Eyes to the World' initiative shows that pupils and staff are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for those within and beyond their own communities. Pupils understand the power of pupil voice and feel their ideas are valued and make a difference in caring for our common home. The junior leadership team wrote letters to the local council to ask for recycling bins for the playground and went on to share expectations of having a litter free school with the other pupils by making posters and signs. The embedded culture of a Growth Mindset removes barriers to learning and limitations to what can be achieved. The introduction of JONK, the 'joy of not knowing', raises expectations and curiosity for learning and contributes to pupils being happy and secure in their stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.

Catholic life is underpinned by strong Christian values and pupils are familiar with how their 'Value Tree' promotes behaviours and attitudes towards learning and each other in their daily lives. These are celebrated weekly by awarding the 'Heart of Gold' to pupils in each class who demonstrate these values in school, building their confidence and self-worth. Pupils are encouraged to identify the school values in themselves and others, further embedding high standards of behaviour and mutual respect. All staff are trained in restorative behaviour strategies allowing pupils to grow in their understanding of the need to forgive and experience the joy of being forgiven. Pastoral support is outstanding for both staff and pupils and positive, nurturing relationships are clearly evident across the school. Staff feel highly valued and cherish the support and acceptance they receive personally and professionally; One member of staff said: 'At St. Edmund's there is a culture of celebration, not just for work but for who we are, even for the mistakes we make, we call them Marvellous Mistakes because we can learn from them'. For those who need extra care there is a Therapy Dog who visits school and a wellbeing champion available to support when required. The school environment clearly demonstrates the traditions of the Catholic faith in its displays and sacred spaces. There are many 'Big Questions' included on display boards to show the focus of work in RE and to challenge deeper thinking around Christian values and Catholic Social Teaching. Each classroom has a highly inviting, interactive prayer space, and another mobile display that focuses on the current value of the week. Pupils contribute to the displays and there is a 'worry box' where pupils can post their concerns to be addressed together. Each aspect is used to very good effect to promote spiritual, moral and emotional development of pupils.

The parish priest, who arrived at the parish of St. Edmund's in September 2021 described the school as having an energy regarding the promotion of the faith, which is well communicated to the children by the staff. He also felt that the positive Catholic ethos is apparent in the curriculum, in the signs and symbols of the Catholic Faith and in the manner in which the liturgical seasons are reflected in the curriculum, and in the newsletters shared with parents.

Leaders, including governors ensure monitoring of Catholic life is a priority and alongside the executive head teacher identify ambitious targets for improvements. Governors continually seek ways of promoting the Catholic life of the federated schools within the local community by communicating its ethos and mission via social media so that it has every opportunity to grow and flourish. They are highly committed to continued professional development (CPD) for themselves and the staff and they ensure that the generous budget allocated to Religious education is at least in line with other subject areas. Leaders and governors care passionately about the wellbeing of staff and pupils. It is well evaluated and planned for by leaders including the establishing of a nurture room, funded by the CMAT. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is carefully taught in an age-appropriate way using 'Life to the Full' resources from Ten Ten leading to pupils having an excellent understanding of positive and respectful relationships. Parents are communicated with at appropriate times to share information and address any queries.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Grade 2

Most pupils, from their varied starting points make good progress including many of those with SEND. Outcomes for pupils are broadly in line with other subject areas and there are planned strategies to increase the number of pupils achieving expected and greater depth going forward. Pupils spoke passionately about how they really enjoy their learning in RE and how it challenges them, especially when they have 'Big Questions' to think about. The creative use of spiritual journaling also promotes engagement and private prayer. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about completing 'double page spreads' as an assessment at the end of each topic, and that they were proud to show all that they learn in their RE lessons. They enjoy learning about other faiths, and they said that this helps them to make links with other areas of the curriculum.

Teaching of RE across the school is at least good and, in some cases, outstanding. In the early years staff are committed to accredited training in the principles of embedding a Hygge classroom. This promotes a calm and restful environment for learning and communication and the benefits are being shared across other areas of the school. Here pupils explored what the word 'peace' means to them. Pupils were able to articulate this clearly based on their personal experiences and the teacher then made links with the meaning of the 'peace of Jesus'. The shared objectives of a lesson are often posed as questions to stimulate deeper thinking and enquiry, and this leads to pupils making thoughtful links to their own life experiences. This was evident in key stage one where pupils explored the importance of love in their lives. One pupil said 'We love God, Jesus, our families and very importantly, ourselves'. During the observation of all lessons, teachers showed very good skills in assessing learning by using careful questions to probe understanding, deepen thinking and to scaffold learners with their responses. In lower key stage two, pupils were fully engaged in a mindful reflection of the experience of the disciples during Pentecost and the impact of the Holy Spirit. This was a very moving experience clearly deepening the pupils' spiritual understanding of Pentecost. In upper key stage two, the thought-provoking question 'How is the Spirit of Jesus at work in the world today?' was explored, linking Pentecost to our everyday lives and mission. To extend the sequence of learning, pupils considered theological and ethical links to the messages from Pope Francis' Encyclicals 'Laudati Si and Fratelli Tutti'. Pupils showed good understanding using religious vocabulary confidently and fluently and many pupils were prompted to expand on their responses.

Teachers use visualisers effectively to model good pieces of work, allowing live improvements to be made together and accelerating learning within the lesson. Assessment in RE is used effectively by teachers to identify gaps and good practice with groups and individuals including those identified as having SEND. The use of 'Big Thinking Books' are invaluable in capturing pupils' questions, ideas and responses during teaching time,

contributing to more holistic assessments. The use of 'I Can' statements alongside the new standards in RE has increased teachers' confidence in assessment and moderation across the federation. Teachers are dedicated in their commitment to teaching RE and have worked closely with other colleagues within the federation and CMAT schools to focus on quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. Work to increase cross curricular opportunities in RE is developing and this is generating greater understanding and motivation for the RE themes and their relevance in the wider curriculum.

The teaching of self-evaluation and peer assessment strategies have been identified by the executive headteacher as the next steps to improve assessment further.

In pupils' books, there is evidence of good use of appropriate religious vocabulary and of exploring the scriptures and liturgies with an understanding of the spiritual content whilst recognising and examining moral values. Pupils with SEND are fully supported in responding to the task or question and verbal praise is given. Marking varies throughout the school with some year groups having questions posed that pupils could respond to, to support their deeper understanding of the task. Positive stickers and praise comments are also used. Whilst worksheets have been used, pupils are now given some opportunities for extended and cross-curricular writing in RE, drawing on the enquiry skills they are developing in English. QR codes are also seen in pupil's workbooks which identify their contribution to a shared presentation which can be seen on Google Drive. Whilst presentation of the work often has quality and quantity, this needs to be more consistent throughout the school.

The leadership of RE by the executive headteacher is outstanding and is a strength across the federation. There is a clear vision for teaching and learning in RE as set out in the federation improvement plan and targets are reviewed and evaluated in given timescales. The development of peer coaching across the federation, underpinned by the Professional Growth Model, is having a positive impact on teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy including effectively supporting those new to teaching in a Catholic school. Governors are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation of RE, promoting self-challenge and timely improvements. They have ensured that the required amount of curriculum time is allocated to RE within each key stage and that it is generously resourced and funded for CPD.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

Grade 2

Collective worship is central to the life of the school, and it is highly valued by all. One child said, 'I really enjoy it when I go to church, I feel special there'. Prayer in its many forms is woven into the everyday rhythms of school life so that it has become a natural experience for all, and pupils fully participate in a variety of ways. Parents recognise how inspired their children are to pray and talk about their growing spirituality with many asking to set up their own prayer spaces at home too. Pupils have grown in confidence to become leaders of a variety of forms of worship celebrated throughout the liturgical year. The well-established work of Minnie Vinnies plan regular collective worship and encourage others to participate by writing prayers and leaving them on their notice board for others to read. Most pupils have opportunities to take ownership of class collective worship, writing their own prayers and using the CAFOD planning form to support their sessions. Pupils also have the responsibility of leading prayer stations for other year groups to visit on prayer day. Key stage two pupils lead a collective worship session in the new outside prayer area and explored the meaning of 'peace'. Pupils were very reverent throughout, and many pupils offered thoughtful responses to the leader's questions. There were a number of resources to focus on, including a prayer tree, 'we have written many prayers for the safety of people in Ukraine', one boy said, 'Jesus will listen to our prayers and give them comfort and hope', demonstrating a good understanding of the value and purpose of prayer.

The Sacramental life of the school shapes its Catholic character and identity and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop on their faith journey. Masses at important times during the Church's liturgical year and opportunities for receiving the Sacrament of reconciliation during Advent and Lent are highly valued. There are established links between the school, the parents and carers and parishioners, all who are warmly invited to attend celebrations whenever possible. The strong and committed partnership between school and parish have ensured that there is a vibrant, structured programme for pupils receiving Sacramental preparation with the parish priest supporting families in their role. The school provides a number of creative opportunities for pupils to express the distinct Catholic character of the school by attending retreat days with Ignite, being involved in musicals and plays, arranging Seder meals for all pupils and a Carol service at Christmas. In May, the school holds a Mary Procession where pupils and staff sing, pray and celebrate our Mother Mary alongside the whole parish community.

The executive headteacher and leaders of collective worship offer excellent role models of good practice and actively support others who need further guidance. Regular and focussed CPD ensures all staff understand the importance of collective worship in the daily life of the school community and promotes increased teacher confidence in planning and leading liturgies and assemblies with pupils. Governors monitor and evaluate collective worship through observation, pupil voice and asking challenging questions of leaders to ensure that it is of a high quality and that it is prioritised for improvement.

The diocesan inspectors wish to thank the executive headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and the whole school community for their very warm and friendly welcome and their valuable input into the life of St. Edmund's school.



EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

Dear Pupils

17th May 2022

Diocesan Inspection of St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Thank you very much for welcoming me and Mrs Southgate into your lovely school. It was a pleasure for me to meet and talk to many of you and to see how hard you work in your lessons. Mrs Southgate looked carefully at your workbooks and we both enjoyed the prayerful reflection on 'Peace' led by Class 4 in your new prayer area outside. It was wonderful to hear from your teachers, the governors and the priest about how proud they all are of you at St. Edmund's.

Here are some of the things we especially liked

- Your school is a very welcoming community where everyone is valued, included and supported.
- Your teachers and other adults take very good care of you and each other.
- You enjoy challenges in your learning and see mistakes as an opportunity to learn and improve.
- Your prayer tables and areas encourage you to be prayerful and reflective.
- Your teachers are dedicated to teaching exciting RE lessons and plan lots of ways for you to enjoy RE.
- You think deeply about others, so you put your faith into action by serving each other, your community and those around the world who need your prayers and help most.

We have asked your teachers to consider:

We have asked your teachers to talk to you about your mission statement so that it clearly reflects how special your school is and that it can be seen and known by everyone. We would like your teachers to use what they learn about Catholic Social Teaching to ensure you all have lots of opportunities to put your faith into action and that you understand how to make a difference in the world now and when you grow up. We would also like you to express your learning in deeper, more creative ways so that your teachers can assess your learning more accurately. So that you understand how to improve your work we would like you to talk to your partners and reflect on your work together. And finally, we would like you to take more responsibility for planning and leading prayers, masses and reflections and that you understand how important that role is.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,

Jan Southgate
Diocesan Inspector

Margaret Stewart
Diocesan Inspector