

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

St. Pancras Catholic Primary School
Stratford Road, Ipswich Suffolk IP1 6EF

DFES No: 935/3341
URN: 124785

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mr Mike Mayston

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Barker

Denominational Inspector: Mrs Wendy Lashmar

Date of Inspection: Tuesday 26th November 2013

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Information about the school.

St Pancras Catholic School is a one form entry primary school for pupils from 4 to 11 years. The school is located in a residential area of north-west Ipswich and serves the parish of St. Mary Magdalen. Pupils come from wide social and economic backgrounds, which includes a significant number of low income households. There are 216 pupils on roll, around 70% of whom are baptised Catholics. 30 % of staff are Catholic. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above average.

Key grades for inspection

1. Outstanding 2. Good 3. Requires Improvement 4. Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness. How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Grade 2

St. Pancras is a good Catholic school with prayer and worship at the centre of school life. Pupils experience the richness of Catholic faith traditions throughout the liturgical year. The committed leadership of the headteacher and governing body (which includes the parish priest) continues to be instrumental in promoting a strong spiritual purpose and in developing the school's Catholic identity. The headteacher inspires an inclusive and caring environment.

The school provides for pupils' spiritual and moral development well and this is reflected in their good behaviour and respect for others. Pupils understand the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves, one pupil said, 'We are following in Jesus' footsteps - he cared for all those in need'. The school is generous in its support of charities. Pupils are very proud of their school and say 'this is a friendly school and people here are kind'.

The RE subject leader and the headteacher work hard to ensure that religious education has a high profile and have now established systematic strategies for monitoring teaching and learning. They are beginning to use the findings to shape future action which is steadily improving outcomes for pupils. The school's capacity for continued improvement is very good.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Include a Catholic education target in the annual cycle of Performance Management for every member of staff, linked to the religious education action plan.
- To ensure that the monitoring of the Catholic life of the school is as formalised and systematic as the monitoring of religious education so that leaders and governors can be effective and precise in identifying and implementing improvement outcomes.
- To ensure that high quality feedback and marking is consistent across the school so that pupils are clear about their achievements and know what to do to improve.
- Continue to build skills and provide age appropriate opportunities to empower pupils to plan and lead their own acts of worship.

Outcomes for pupils.

Grade 2

Pupils benefit well from the Catholic life of the school. They undertake responsibilities such as pupil house captains and vice captains who are elected by their peers for their leadership skills. Pupils' ideas are taken into account through the house system and pupil perception interviews. The house system is also used for aspects of pastoral care and the recognition of achievements. Class-based lessons deliver an 'Education for Personal Relationships' programme which pupils and parents find interesting and helpful. The school has adopted seven Christian values, promoted throughout the day and pupils are beginning to understand how *humility, generosity, joy, forgiveness, courage, perseverance and creativity* define Christian attitudes and behaviour and impact on daily actions. Pupils are respectful of adults and each other, they have a strong sense of treating each other fairly and older pupils said, 'You must not treat people differently because of where they come from'. Younger pupils said 'when things go wrong God helps us to put things right and we learn how to forgive and to say sorry'.

Pupils participate fully in liturgy through song, reading and contributing to bidding prayers. Pupils are reverent both in collective worship and class prayers. Outstanding singing enhances worship. There is a worship programme linked to the liturgical year which includes Reconciliation and praying the rosary in addition to Masses and assemblies. Pupils understand the importance of prayer as a way of 'talking to God'. They have a good knowledge of traditional prayers and are able to compose their own prayers. Older pupils would appreciate the opportunity to plan and lead worship each month, they feel confident if they are given time to prepare. Pupils and their families appreciate the school remembrance book, one pupil explained, 'anyone can put the names of people who have died in the book and these are read out.....sometimes it is sad and emotional, but reassuring.'

Pupils make steady progress in religious literacy across the school, as a consequence standards of attainment are improving. This is evidenced in the work they produce and the assessment data collected in October and July each year. They achieve age appropriate levels of attainment and some exceed this. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils are eager to do well. In the best lessons all pupils make good progress and are challenged in their thinking by skilful questioning. However, occasionally activities do not support pupils' learning appropriately and as a result they do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils enjoy learning about the saints and particularly relate to the saint of their House. They enjoy 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' scheme saying it is 'child friendly' and makes religious education 'fun to learn'. Pupils remarked that it 'helps to get you started and pushes you on as you move through a topic' and 'it poses questions that you can discuss with your teachers and partners'. For example, year 5 pupils considered what might happen if the Ten Commandments were changed, the discussion raised questions such as, would we stop being respectful and forget to be 'stewards of the earth'? Older pupils are aware of their attainment and know what they need to do to improve as a result of precise feedback and marking.

Leaders and Managers.

Grade 2

The school is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic community. The headteacher is instrumental in promoting the Catholic life of the school. Leaders and governors have a strong commitment to the Church's mission in education and ensure that it is core in communications with parents and others, particularly through the school newsletter. It is closely bound with the life of the parish and is central to school policies. Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are supportive, visit the school and attend services but now need to establish plans for more formal monitoring of the school's Catholic life. The parish priest serves on the governing body as vice chairman and his views and advice are highly valued by the school community. The 'Every Child Matters' leader ensures that there is a close bond between families and the school. He ensures that pupils from all cultural backgrounds are proportionately represented. He also ensures that the school retains and develops strong links with agencies across a wide-range of professional health and care services. Beyond the curriculum pupils are involved in many aspects of school life including fundraising for both local and global charities and immediate responses to appeals such as that currently for the Philippines. They represent their school with pride in sporting events and the highly successful choir has had the opportunity to sing at Snape Maltings, The Royal Albert Hall and Downing Street. There is an active 'Friends of the School' association and parents appreciate their partnership with the school and the information they receive. At the last Ofsted in June 100% of parents surveyed said they would recommend the school to others.

Enthusiasm and drive from the headteacher and the religious education leader and the determination of the governing body have ensured systems are now in place for monitoring and analysing findings for the provision of religious education. This is beginning to impact on improving outcomes for pupils. The RE subject leader is given regular, dedicated time each term to fulfil her leadership role. Teachers are supported well in the delivery of the curriculum and guidance on Catholic education is included in the induction of new teachers. Individual governors are now taking subject responsibility and matching their skills to specific areas of management. They are developing their role as 'critical friend' and the RE governor and RE subject leader work closely together to scrutinise data, discuss findings from monitoring activities such as lesson observations and work scrutiny. This gives direction for the RE action plan. The new Chair of Governors is beginning to develop systems for reporting back to ensure governors are fully informed of strengths and areas for development in religious education. The introduction of 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' RE programme has enhanced teachers' subject knowledge and their confidence in its delivery. There is a clear message to all that religious education is a core area of learning and therefore high priority.

Provision.

Grade 2

The Parish Priest works well with the school, for example, supporting leaders in developing a comprehensive liturgical cycle. Most key stage assemblies reflect the Church's year and feast days. Class-led assemblies focus on what children have learned in their RE lessons. Mass is said weekly in the school and is significant to the Catholic life of this community. Some Masses are whole school gatherings, others are class-centred. All the school's Masses are shared with the parish community, together with parents, grandparents and

other family members and friends. This helps to build links between home, school and parish. Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion in the parish is largely organised and led by the school. Catholic traditions are celebrated, for example during October and May, significant numbers of pupils of all ages readily and voluntarily give up playtimes to gather together to say a decade of the rosary. During Lent and Advent there are opportunities for individual reconciliation following a short service which all pupils attend.

The quality of religious education lessons are improving through systematic observation and feedback by the RE leader and headteacher. Overall, lessons are good and some are outstanding. In the most effective lessons high quality questions challenge and extend pupils' thinking and motivating tasks are chosen which engage and inspire pupils. However, some lessons are too 'task focused' and teachers need to consider activities which will best achieve pupils' next steps in their learning. Assessments of pupils' work are completed each half term and are linked to the *National RE Levels of Attainment*. These are recorded and tracked. Work is moderated to give consistency of standards. Some good oral feedback and marking was evidenced which gave appropriate praise and made comments to extend or question the learning, but this was not consistent across the school. However, a year 2 pupil commented, 'sometimes, if we get in a pickle, the teacher explains a bit more. If we get stuck the teacher helps us to improve and then in the next lesson we do different work, but better'.

With a healthier budget the school has invested in a new published scheme of work, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'. This has had a huge impact on pupils' learning. Teachers are more confident and pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the topics. To enhance the RE curriculum the school has introduced a progressive series of faith-based visits for each year group. Destinations include their own parish church, St. John's Cathedral in Norwich, Walsingham, Westminster Cathedral, the 'Life of Christ' and retreat at Clare Priory. This gives pupils the chance to broaden their knowledge and experience of the wider church community. Religious education meets the requirements of the Bishop's Conference and a minimum of 10% of curriculum time is allocated to religious education.

The inspector wishes to thank the headteacher and all members of the school community for their very warm welcome and for contributing to a very interesting visit.

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

11th December 2013

Dear Pupils,

Diocesan Inspection of St. Pancras Catholic Primary School

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. Thank you to all those pupils who spoke to me and answered my questions, especially the groups from Year 2 and Year 6. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. I enjoyed being present at your Key Stage 2 assembly and sharing your Religious Education lessons. Well done to everyone involved.

Here are some of the things I especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school centred in prayer and worship.
- You treat each other fairly and show respect to everyone in your school. You are well cared for by your teachers.
- The school provides very good opportunities for you to develop personally, spiritually and morally.

I have asked your teachers and governors to make sure that they regularly check and keep improving the Catholic Education in your school so that it is the best it can be. I think you would learn from planning and preparing more of your own acts of worship. I have also asked your teachers to make sure they all give you feedback and marking which is clear about what you have done well and what you need to do to improve.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J.W. Lashmar
Diocesan Inspector