



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Edward's Catholic Primary school
Local Authority: Newham - URN: 147335
Inspection Date: 7th February 2020
Reporting Inspector: Mr Stephen Beck

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Academy
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 430
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: February 2015

School Address:
Green Street
Upton Park
London,
E13 9AX

Tel. No. 020 8472 4337
Headteacher: Mr Christopher Mabey
Chair of Governors: Mr Michael Laniyan

Information about the school

St Edward's Catholic Primary is a popular, larger than average two form entry Catholic academy school, with a 52 part-time place nursery. It converted from voluntary aided status to join the 'Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust' in September 2019. These changes have been well managed by the Headteacher who has set a clear course to maximise the benefits moving forward. The school is located in Upton Park in the London Borough of Newham and is part of the Diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Compassion, Upton Park with a small number of pupils coming from adjoining parishes. There are currently 430 pupils aged 3 -11 on roll, drawn from a diverse local population living in a mixture of owner-occupied, rented and social housing. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 90%. There is an above-average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and 53% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 10% is below the national average as is the number of pupils who receive pupil premium at 13%. In 2013, St Edward's became a 'Teaching School' and together with UEL delivers the 'Schools Direct Programme'. There are currently 23 schools within the alliance and the Headteacher is recognised as a 'National Leader of Education'.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Edward's is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school. Since its last inspection the school has maintained its outstanding Catholic life. This is firmly centred on the school mission in action, which strives to provide the very best outcomes for pupils. This vision is shared by the school leadership, governors, and a dedicated staff team, who place the spiritual and moral development of pupils as their highest priority. Through the leadership of the Headteacher, described by a number of stakeholders as charismatic, the school has developed a comprehensive, Catholic, family orientated community infrastructure with Christ at the centre. The school fosters very positive relationships with families. This has had a significant impact on their response to the individual needs of pupils. Consequently they are able to thrive and enjoy their learning. The school is to be commended for gaining the 'Gold Religious Education Quality Mark', only held by a small number of schools. The assessor noted that the achievement recognised the school, *"For embedding excellent, creative and innovative R.E. Practice throughout the school and for the recognition as outstanding in the wider community," in February 2017.* In addition it has been recognised as a 'Primary Teaching School' leading 23 schools, being the only alliance lead 'Catholic Teaching School' in the diocese and delivers an annual module for the diocesan NQT programme.

St. Edward's is a culturally diverse community and consciously values and appreciates the needs of children from a diversity of backgrounds. The parents, parish and governors work in partnership to recognise the challenges and priorities of such a diverse community. The school is an extension of home and parish, benefitting from a strong 'Home, School, Parish partnership'. Christ is explicitly at the centre of all that they do. The Catholic Faith is taught and 'lived out' in the school with Gospel teachings being explored throughout the day. Time is given to prayer which pupils described, *"as opportunities to have a conversation with God."*

All members of the school community are valued and through the curriculum, pupils are taught to care for themselves and the wider community. The development in pupils of self-respect and responsibility is a strength and is fostered throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the school's Mission Statement, which is reflected upon daily, at the onset of all their work activities, as it is on the front cover of all pupils' bespoke workbooks with all endeavouring to live by the Mission Statement, *'Following Christ, we reach our goals'*. Pupils make good progress from their starting points across all key stages. As the new assessment processes become embedded, there is potential to provide more targeted support to further improve outcomes, particularly for more able pupils.

The school is facing a change in leadership when the current headteacher leaves at the end of this academic year. His skilled stewardship of the school over the past seventeen years has seen the development of a strong senior leadership team and accordingly, there is clear capacity to support a smooth transition and build on the school's current strengths moving forward. The school has a capable governing body with a wide-ranging skill set that both supports and challenges.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Continue to embed the new assessment framework to secure more targeted teaching and ensure appropriate provision is made for all pupils, particularly the more able, to enable them to achieve their full potential. The introduction of pupil progress meetings in Religious Education would undoubtedly support this process.
- Build on current opportunities both in school and across the Academy Trust to share identified good practice in the teaching of Religious Education and widen moderation opportunities.

CATHOLIC LIFE

Grade 1

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the 'Catholic Life of the School' is outstanding. The school's self-evaluation provided for this inspection was comprehensive. It identified the school's strengths and areas for development. With regular updating, it will prove to be a useful working tool for ongoing development.

St Edward's school exudes a strong sense of spiritual purpose. There is a focus on teamwork, achieving high standards and creating a vibrant nurturing environment rooted in Gospel values for pupils to develop and learn in. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and show a great respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. St. Edward's is a place where worship, faith, education and practice are central to school life. Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and extended community, for example, 'Head Boy', 'Head Girl', 'Prefects', 'Mini-Vinnies', 'Chaplaincy Team', 'Liturgy Leaders', 'Student Council', 'Teaching and Learning Committee' and 'Science Ambassador'. Some of these roles are developing, but are serving pupil self-confidence and pupil voice well. It would be opportune to utilise some of these to enhance pupil leadership in the 'Catholic Life of the School'. Pupils shared with the inspector their excitement at having the opportunity to take on these roles and were able to articulate the protocols and procedures involved in getting them.

Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school as seen in the way they confidently participate in 'Collective Worship', school assemblies and in parish and community celebrations with enthusiasm and a sense of togetherness. This enables pupils to further develop responsibility, independence and to demonstrate care, respect and consideration for all. The behaviour of pupils in class and round the school is very good.

Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and approach their work with enthusiasm. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons and are keen to take a full and active part. Their positive behaviour, particularly their behaviour for learning, makes a significant contribution to their high levels of achievement. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop their potential in all aspects of school life and readily embrace the opportunities offered to them through the school's enrichment activities. The school has also pioneered having a school dog 'Teddy', as part of its pastoral development of pupils, which other schools have subsequently adopted.

St. Edward's Catholic school has a strong and living commitment to evangelisation and strives to meet the call to spread Jesus' word in a variety of ways in the local community.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of service and support for others. They grow in their knowledge that the call to justice and service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. The school adopts an annual charity with the deanery group of schools for which to raise funds. Pupils indicated they would welcome opportunities to expand this to include other charities of their choosing.

Pupils demonstrate respect and understanding of other faiths and religions. They certainly live their school motto, *'Following Christ, we reach our goals'* in the way they interact with each other. Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. They understand that they are known and loved by adults in school and by God. Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a good understanding of loving relationships within the context of being a Christian. Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, have a growing awareness as they move through the school of what it means to have a vocation and from an early age recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. It was interesting on inspection day to meet a group of past pupils who were at various stages of their secondary schooling. They spoke highly about their time at St Edward's about which they commented, *"It prepared us well for the move into secondary school having given us a belief in ourselves and what we can achieve"*.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 2

St Edward's uses 'Come and See' as the basis of its Religious Education Programme and 'Journey in love' for its Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) scheme of work. These are effectively linked to the school's P.H.S.E. provision with parents expressing support and knowledge about the programme. They also appreciated the termly Religious Education Newsletter.

The most recently submitted data indicates that a majority of pupils, from varied starting points, make at least good progress or better. The school's tracking package gives evidence that all groups of pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with SEN, are making progress at least in line with other pupils. The school is in the process of implementing the new diocesan assessment strategy. As this becomes embedded teachers will become better equipped to target their teaching to pupil needs and enhance targeted provision, particularly for more able pupils. Religious Education is at the heart of the school curriculum and pupils' learning and is intrinsically linked with many subjects, such as: French, Music, Art and English. Pupils say they enjoy Religious Education, they have positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning, explaining how it helps them to understand how to live their lives. They are keen to do well and most work at a good pace in lessons. This results in behaviour for learning, enabling good quality learning to take place in the majority of classes. Pupils develop and apply a range of skills well, and as they reach upper key stage two are able to interpret sources, reflect and evaluate, engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding to reflect spiritually. They are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life through prayer and actions of how they treat and respect others. Pupils are articulate, confident and passionate about their faith and know how it will help them on their journey through life.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good with some elements of outstanding. The Religious Education Leader is very committed, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. She is well informed about current developments and has high expectations, which she communicates effectively with staff regularly during dedicated meetings. She is passionate about her subject and is proactively developing teaching. By more sharing of the very best practice and continued modelling by leaders, teaching could become more consistent throughout the school. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and should not be afraid to take more risks and be innovative in their approach. Good use of talk partners throughout school supports learning and promotes opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways.

Teaching Assistants support learning in a variety of different contexts and this would benefit from a review to ensure the impact of this support is maximised across the school.

The majority of lessons observed as part of this inspection were well planned and resourced enabling pupils to make progress in lessons. In these lessons, pupils stayed on task, the pace of lessons was balanced and thoughtful responses were provided to open-ended questioning by teachers. There was a balance between teacher input and pupil engagement with a range of tasks set. This identified good practice could be usefully shared across the school. In upper Key Stage 2, an excellent lesson on the topic of 'Caritas' was marked with a reflective start and built very successfully on prior learning with the teacher maximising opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary and debating skills. In another Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher developed excellent cross-curricular links with French where pupils considered Christianity as a global religion. Strong links were made with scripture by exploring the source and use of the Lord's Prayer around the world. Where teaching was less strong, it was didactic, with lengthy teacher input and reduced time for pupils to complete tasks. This resulted in lower pupil engagement. From discussions with the school's improvement partner and actions defined in the most recent diocesan mid-term review the school is aware of and actioning this development point through the advice to continue the modelling of identified good practice.

The school benefits from a strong senior leadership team and the services of a well-informed governing body many of whom have had a long association with the school. With a varied set of skills and very able Chair, who is supported by a knowledgeable Vice-Chair, the Governors are well equipped to offer strategic support to move the school forward. With the imminent appointment of a new headteacher, they will have a key role in both supporting and challenging the new incumbent and setting the future direction for the school and there is clear capacity to do this.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers wholeheartedly and confidently. When asked about what they did in Collective Worship, a pupil responded, "*We pray to God, and we sing. It's wonderful, and I wish we could do it all day.*" Pupils appreciate the quality of the spiritual experiences they are given and show a great understanding of Gospel values.

They have experience of a wide variety of prayer styles including meditation, guided prayer and enjoy composing their own petitions. Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer, which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer, both traditional and contemporary. Pupils have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and how this is reflected in their Collective Worship during the school year. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is seen in the way many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of singing, in the respectful, prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation. The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive, profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a sense of respect for those who think differently.

Collective Worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is part of all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff. Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect an excellent understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school. The school invites adults associated with the community to attend worship in a variety of forms and response to this invitation is excellent. There is a good turnout from parishioners and families when invited to school Masses and assemblies and those attending speak highly of how they feel welcomed and valued on such occasions. Pupils appreciate the opportunities the school provides for their parents and carers to join them.

Leaders have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context. Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are appropriate models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They provide a variety of experiences for pupils throughout the week and across the liturgical year. It is noteworthy that pupils have the opportunity to participate in an annual pilgrimage to Rome with a group of deanery schools during which they attend the celebration of Mass in St Pope John Paul II Chapel and the English College.

Displays around the school and in classrooms are of very high quality with many reflecting the school's strong 'Catholic Ethos'. The school environment is a stimulating one, enhanced by pupil inspired and painted murals. It is also commendable how the external space around the school has been creatively developed. Within the school, the provision of a well-used 'St Edward's room' has provided pupils with a valued sacred space.

In the absence of a parish priest, the school has developed strong links with other priests and deans within Newham and the Westminster Diocese, who are generous with their time and support. This is appreciated by all members of the school community for the visual and spiritual support provided to pupils and staff. They participate in Collective Worship and regularly say Mass for classes and the whole school community. A very high return of parental questionnaires (211) was received with a 100% satisfaction rating reflecting the strong home, school, parish partnership that has been established. Governors are invited to attend assemblies, school liturgies, celebrations and Masses. Leaders and Governors keep Collective Worship under review as part of their self-evaluation processes. The school accurately commented in its own self-evaluation and the inspector agrees with their view that, *'The school consistently provides opportunities to all stakeholders to celebrate their faith in a spiritual working and learning environment, where Gospel Values influence the spiritual and moral development of all its members, irrespective of ability, heritage, socio-economic background or religious beliefs.'* In a choir session attended, pupils sang beautifully, including a number of soloists demonstrating significant confidence in their abilities and this is an undoubted strength of the school.