

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

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

*East Anglian Way, Church Road, Gorleston, NR31 6QY*

DFES No: 926 3403

URN: 121144

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mr John Harris

Headteacher: Mrs Victoria Long

Denominational Inspector:

Mrs M. Betts

Associate Inspector:

Mrs T. Selvey

Date of Inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013

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## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's Catholic School is a one form entry primary school with part-time nursery provision for pupils from 3 to 11 years. The school serves the two local parishes of St Peter's, Gorleston and St Mary's, Great Yarmouth. There are 217 pupils on roll, 61% of whom are Catholic. 2% of pupils come from other world faith backgrounds. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are broadly average when compared nationally, and rising steadily.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.**

**Grade: 2**

St Mary'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 and Deputy is instrumental in inspiring a strong spiritual purpose throughout the school. This effectively promotes the pupils' personal development and faith awareness which reflects in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Relationships within the school are good and reflect Christian love and concern for others. Pupils say "We all have respect for each other here". Prayer and worship are of pivotal importance in the school's life. Religious Education (RE) has a high profile and all staff are committed to improving their skills through training opportunities.

The school's capacity to go on improving is extremely good. The headteacher, governors and deputy head have a good overall view of the school's strengths and are putting appropriate plans into action to further develop many areas relating to RE and the school's Catholic life. Next term a new RE programme will be introduced and RE assessment will be a priority within planning. This should further enhance teachers' subject knowledge and promote more challenging learning opportunities. The school has achieved most of the last diocesan inspection development areas.

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

- Develop RE marking so that pupils know what they should do to improve their work, extend their learning and have opportunities to make these improvements.
- Embed assessment procedures to track, analyse and promote pupils' progress in line with National Attainment levels.
- Ensure the Early Years' RE curriculum is taught explicitly.
- Embed the practice of asking for pupils' evaluations of RE, worship and Catholic life to enhance the school's monitoring procedures.

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

**Grade 2**

Pupils benefit very well from the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils display respect and trust towards each other and to adults, describing the school as a family. They willingly undertake responsibilities and are enthusiastic to care for and support others in need. This is clearly demonstrated in their involvement with the "Go Givers Make a Difference Challenge", exploring ways of helping the homeless and of increasing free education in developing countries. The school raises funds for many and varied charities. Pupils praise the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them and encourage their learning. Pupils'

achievements are recognised, praised and valued. Their views and ideas are sought and acted upon through the School Council and in the future through the newly established RE council. Pupils understand the school's Mission Statement and can articulate how the values that they are taught impact on their lives, one example being given by a pupil who said "I try to follow the example of Jesus and forgive each other".

All pupils respond well to worship and the prayer life of the school. They participate respectfully and with ease. For example at the May procession, pupils were attentive and reverent despite the cold and windy weather. Pupils have opportunities to create their own prayers as part of their RE learning and to use these in worship. They enjoy worship especially when stories, drama and quizzes are used to promote the theme. Pupils' singing and instrument playing significantly enhances worship. Key Stage 1 children especially enjoy their involvement in the presentation of "Open the Book" bible stories given by members of the parish community. Pupils contribute and participate in all celebration services but do not as yet have opportunities to independently plan and prepare their own class act of worship. Worship contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The pupils are developing a sound knowledge of religious education and achieve age appropriate RE levels of attainment. During a Key Stage 1 lesson pupils, in pairs, prepared sentences to communicate to a friend, Jesus' good news. The results demonstrated good religious literacy and depth of thought. Most pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when linked to cross curricular subjects and practical activities such as drama, designing posters, or researching the bible. Pupils' RE books are well presented and evidence a sufficient coverage of the curriculum. Pupils undertake a good variety of written work.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS. How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school?**

### **Grade 2**

The school is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic community exemplified by a pupil who said "We are taught about God and to be yourself". The headteacher, deputy and governors are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. They communicate a clear vision for the Catholic ethos which inspires all in the school community. There is a strong and effective commitment in the school to promote pupils' well-being and provide for individual pupil and family needs. Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are supportive and well informed about Catholic activities through the Headteacher's report and through their attendance at services. Attractive displays around school confirm the Catholic identity. The school has very good links with other local schools. Training based on working within the Catholic ethos has been arranged for all staff. The school promotes partnership with parents. A strong relationship with the parish has been developed through the close involvement with the school of two parish priests and many parishioners.

The deputy, as religious education subject leader, works extremely hard and ensures this subject has a high profile across the school. She provides strong support and guidance for staff especially for those with a non-Catholic background and arranges a variety of training opportunities. Senior leaders monitor the subject through lesson observations and book scrutiny, and have a clear plan for future improvements. Though tracking of RE assessment data is at an early stage, plans are in place to analyse these results to further inform lesson planning. A clear direction for improvement has been set. Governors visit the school regularly and feedback their evaluations to the curriculum committee of the governing body.

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

The quality of worship, prayer and sacramental life of the school is outstanding. Pupils experience a wide range of Catholic enrichment opportunities such as being involved regularly in Mass, prayer, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and liturgical celebrations. Reconciliation services take place at key times of the liturgical year. Worship is well planned using visual presentations, bible and other stories, drama and song, to promote pupils' interest and develop their thinking. A calm reflective atmosphere is created. The use of themes related to the liturgical year and the "Value of the Month" make excellent contributions to pupils' spiritual and moral development. There are attractive prayer tables in each classroom. Both parish priests make a significant contribution to the sacramental life of the school.

The quality of religious education lessons is good overall with some outstanding features observed. Teachers plan well with clear learning objectives made explicit to the pupils. In the most effective lessons open questioning challenges and extends pupils' thinking, and practical activities are used well to gain pupils' interest and develop their learning. Teaching assistants are supportive and used to maximise learning, as exemplified by relevant questions planned for the children to answer whilst doing their RE craft activity. Assessments are undertaken and these are linked to National RE Attainment levels. Some good marking affirming achievement was evidenced but this did not challenge pupils to work towards their next attainment level or give them the opportunity to improve or extend their work.

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. Religious education is clearly integrated within the Foundation stage curriculum but explicit RE teaching was not evidenced or timetabled. Religious education is sometimes linked to other curriculum areas particularly to literacy, drama, craft and information and communication technology (ICT). In a Key Stage 2 class, pupils in groups decided how to explain one particular gift of the Holy Spirit using their own chosen method. Drama, puppets, and posters were all used. Other faiths are studied and the school plans for visits and visitors to enrich this learning. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example in a Key Stage 2 lesson, which related Jesus' Great Commission to the story of Gladys Aylward and her work with orphaned children in China, pupils were effectively challenged to explore how they could share in mission outreach to others. Attractive religious education displays around school give added value to this core subject.

The inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to their very enjoyable and interesting visit.

# EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE



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

24<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. Thank you to all those pupils who spoke to us especially the group from Year 6. We were very interested in your views of your school. We enjoyed being present at all your Religious Education lessons. It was a great privilege for us to be present for your May procession service and for the Key Stage 1 Open the Book presentation. Well done to everyone involved.

Here are some of the things we especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school that provides many opportunities for prayer and worship.
- 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.

We have asked your teachers to consider when they are marking your RE work to check that you know what you could do to extend your work and are given time to make these improvements. After an RE assessment, your results will in future provide you with information as to how you are doing and what you need to do to reach the next level. We have also asked the teachers to put in place their plan to seek for your ideas as to what you like about RE lessons, assemblies and the life at your school and how these could be made even better. We think the younger children at your school would benefit from regular explicit RE teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Mrs M. Betts and Mrs T. Selvey  
Diocesan Inspectors