



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School

LEA: Essex

Inspection Date: 19 January 2016

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan
Lizzie McWhirter

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

Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 419
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: February 2011

School Address:
Beardsley Drive
Springfield
Chelmsford
CM1 6ZQ

Tel. No. 01245 460107
Headteacher: Mr G. Waters
Chair of Governors: Mrs M. Uzzell

Information about the school

The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School is a two form entry shared denomination school for pupils aged 4-11 in North Springfield, Chelmsford Essex in the Catholic Diocese of Brentwood and Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford. It serves the parish of St Augustine's in North Springfield and the wider area. There are 419 pupils on roll, 20% of whom are Catholics. The percentage of Catholic teachers is 26.3%, one of whom has the CCRS qualification. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Families and pupils are supported by the provision of breakfast and after school clubs. The school is part of the Chelmsford Consortium of Schools.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

The Bishops is a good school with many strengths. There is strong leadership at all levels which ensures Christianity permeates school life. The school is fully inclusive and welcomes pupils of all faith backgrounds or none. Pupils' depth of Bible knowledge is very good and sustains them in daily life. Pupils are given many opportunities to experience prayer and worship which is central to the life of the school. The quality of teaching is consistently good. The school has a strong pastoral care system and staff are very good role models for pupils. Behaviour is very good, pupils work well and say they enjoy religious education. During the course of their time in the school, pupils make good progress.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The school has a strong Christian identity with very good leadership from the headteacher and his team supported by the governing body which includes both the Anglican and Catholic priests from St Augustine's. The headteacher has built a strong middle management team which includes two subject leaders for religious education. There is a regular cycle of monitoring which includes members of the governing body. Staff are committed to improving their skills through training opportunities. There is every indication that current effectiveness is likely to be maintained.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the assessment of religious education to ensure teaching staff have a good understanding of levels of attainment to inform future planning and raise standards.
- Ensure pupils deepen their experience and knowledge of traditions of the Catholic Church
- Enable pupils to have additional occasions to plan and lead worship to support their personal development.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

The quality of pupils' learning and progress in religious education is generally good. Pupils' behaviour for learning is also good. The implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme is resulting in a good level of attainment for all groups. During lessons observed, pupils were engaged and interested. They co-operate and work well individually and in pairs. Pupils' knowledge and skills are developing well and they enjoy a wide range of cross curricular activities including discussions, drama, role play and art. They are gaining religious literacy at a good rate throughout the school. Workbooks are well presented and pupils are given advice on how to improve their work. Overall pupils make good progress and achieve diocesan expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils contribute to and benefit from the Christian life of the school to a great extent. They welcome opportunities to become play leaders and buddies who help and support younger children. Pupils are clear about the ways they can seek help when necessary. They have a strong sense of belonging and are keen to take on responsibilities. Pupils express their own views with confidence and are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. Their achievements in and out of school are valued and recognised in special assemblies and awards. Pupils respect the Catholic and Anglican traditions of the school and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus. They show respect for the religious beliefs of all members of their community. Pupils respond well to the needs of people beyond the school and support a range of charities which have included making Christmas boxes for children in Eastern Europe as well as contributing to the local foodbank at Harvest time.

Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. During collective worship pupils are attentive and responsive. Pupils are encouraged to compose their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. However, most pupils have a limited knowledge of the traditional prayers of the Church although the liturgical year is followed through assemblies. Pupils from each Key Stage attend St Augustine's Church on a rota basis for a liturgy for which they compose prayers and read the gospel. At present their involvement does not extend to planning and preparing acts of worship although there are plans for this to happen. All classrooms have a prayer table with a cross, bible and pupils' prayer books. There are good links with the parish and both priests are frequent visitors to the school. Although pupils do not attend Mass on a regular basis there is a Leaving Mass for Year 6 pupils each year.

Pastoral care is also a strength of the school and a shared responsibility of all staff. Pupils spoken to said they know where to go for help if they have a concern about themselves or other children. Older pupils take their responsibilities for younger children seriously. In conversation pupils said they feel safe, well cared for and believe their views are valued and taken into account. They talked enthusiastically about their involvement in the wider life of the school.

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The leadership of the school's Christian life which includes some aspects of Catholicity is good. The experienced head teacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by all members of the community. There is a strong leadership team who promote the Christian life of the school and are good role models for pupils. They ensure pastoral care of pupils is very good. The headteacher and his team regularly evaluate provision for Christian rather than Catholic life and the ethos of the school is stated through its mission statement and aims. Clergy and staff meet twice a year as a Worship Committee to discuss and plan the key events of the year. There is a range of religious education related displays in classes and around the school which are linked to gospel themes, the liturgical year, particular events or specific prayers. These lead to a good environment for Christian education.

The subject leaders for religious education keep abreast of current developments. They introduced the diocesan recommended 'Come and See' religious education programme and attend diocesan conferences as well as courses which they disseminate to staff during meetings. In-service sessions are used effectively to support and develop staff skills and subject knowledge. Regular monitoring of planning and assessments enables school leaders to have a good knowledge of areas for development. is required. At present a new assessment system is being trialled. Moderation of levels of attainment is in place although evidence for the higher levels is not always sufficient.

The school governors are committed to the Christian life of the school. They are experienced, aware of their responsibilities and knowledgeable about the school and its day-to-day activities. They review and revise the School Development Plan termly and there are regular monitoring visits from individual governors who prepare reports for the full governing body. Both Anglican and Catholic priests from St Augustine's parish are on the governing body and are frequent visitors to

the school to visit classrooms. The Chair of governors meets the headteacher every week to evaluate the life of the school. She is kept well informed about new initiatives in religious education and how these are being implemented.

The school is very well regarded by parents with good representation on the governing body. Communication is good with curriculum information sent home every term as well as a weekly newsletter which includes aspects of the religious life of the school. Interviews and testimonials indicate that parents are overwhelmingly happy with the provision for religious education and Christian life. They appreciate the high standard of education, the care shown to pupils and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Parents and families are invited to many school celebrations including liturgies in St Augustine's church.

Provision

Grade 2

During the inspection all teaching observed was good. This is the result of good planning and support from the subject leaders. Cross curricular links are evident and during the inspection lessons involving Art, Design and Technology and Literacy were seen. In a very good lesson in Year 3 about the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary careful planning, lively pace and open questioning enabled all pupils to achieve well and make good progress. Lessons observed included a range of tasks as well as good support from teaching assistants which enabled all pupils to engage with the learning objective. Workbooks are well presented although written work is sparse. Some pieces of work indicate the level at which pupils are working. Marking is positive with the best including 'next steps' for pupils. All groups make good progress.

The school does not devote 10% of teaching time to religious education as required by the Bishops' Conference. This has resulted in some pupils lacking a depth of knowledge of Catholic traditions and practices. The diocesan recommended scheme, 'Come and See,' supported by 'Journey in Love.' Is used throughout the school. The curriculum is enhanced through good links with local clergy and an annual International Week. Drama, music and art are also incorporated into the curriculum. Other faiths are well taught through visits to a range of places of worship and the shared experiences of members of staff.

Pupils are given many opportunities to experience worship and prayer which are central to the school's life although these do not always reflect Catholic practice. Leadership ensures collective worship is well planned and there is a variety of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer which are responsive to the school's religious diversity. Special assemblies are held which reflect the Church's liturgical year including Ash Wednesday and Holy Week. Pupils also explore the Stations of the Cross through visits to St Augustine's Church. During the inspection pupils spoken to said they felt the prayer life of the school helped them to be close to God. The school encourages pupils to develop a sense of service and offers a variety of clubs and enrichment activities which provide opportunities for the development of skills and interests.

The inspector would like to thank all members of the school community for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended during her visit.