



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: Our Lady and St George's Catholic Primary School

LEA: Waltham Forest

Inspection Date: 24th January 2018

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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: 398
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: October 2012

School Address:
Shernhall Street
Walthamstow
London
E17 3EA

Tel. No. 020 8520 3552
Headteacher: Mrs. R McGlynn
Chair of Governors: Mrs. M Harrington

Information about the school

Our Lady and St George's Catholic Primary School is a two form entry voluntary aided school with nursery in Walthamstow and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parishes of Our Lady and St George Walthamstow and Christ the King, Chingford. There are currently 398 pupils aged 4-11 on roll with 33 in the nursery. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 94% with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations or other faith backgrounds. The majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group at 35% from Black African or Caribbean heritage. 41% of pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils with special education needs is also above the national average. The school is on a split site with Early years and Key Stage 1 next door to the parish church while Key Stage 2 is 700 metres away. The school is part of the Aquinas Teaching and Learning Trust which meets regularly to share good practice and plan joint events.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

Our Lady and St George's is an outstanding Catholic school which is highly effective in ensuring very good outcomes for pupils and providing leadership which gives a clear sense of purpose and direction. Pupils are given many opportunities for spiritual and moral development which are part of the provision for religious education, prayer and collective worship. Senior leaders are excellent role models and the Catholicity of the school is evident in all aspects of its work. There is a clear focus on reviewing provision and improving resources as well as putting in place robust systems for teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is very good and shared by all members of the school community as well as the priests from the local parish. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of school life. They are familiar with the Mission Statement, 'With Jesus we join together to love, listen, respect, learn and enjoy.' Parents praise the standard of education and the good level of communication. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' standards of attainment meet or exceed diocesan expectations.

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2012 identified three areas for development. The first was to develop links with parents and carers to enrich the curriculum and learning experiences. The school has addressed this by introducing an International Day to which parents and families are invited to share food, customs and national costumes. This is in addition to using pupils' home languages in the reciting of the Rosary and the celebration of Mass. The second was to provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their learning independently. To do this the school has implemented a programme of peer and self-assessment together with improved resources. The third was to continue staff training on the use and implementation of the 'Come and See' religious education programme which is now firmly embedded. Since then the experienced headteacher has also put in place systems to enhance the Catholic life of the school and ensure good outcomes for all groups of pupils. Assessment and tracking are leading to high standards of attainment in religious education. The school's links with other schools in the trust are leading to an improvement in staff assessment skills. The subject leader has an excellent understanding of her role and is well placed to support colleagues. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has effective strategies to share good practice with new staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement those areas identified in the action plan for religious education.
- Prepare staff for the changes in assessment in religious education to be implemented later this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Attainment and progress in religious education are very good. Pupils achieve high standards and work with interest and commitment. Pupils spoken to said they enjoy their religious education lessons and appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. Behaviour for learning is excellent and pupils are eager to

participate in activities and work well together whether in groups or pairs. Older pupils can also work independently and use research skills to extend their understanding. Writing targets are incorporated into written work resulting in well-presented religious education books which show coverage of the curriculum and indicate good progress made by all groups. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their ages and are able to integrate religious ideas into their own lives. Standards of attainment are in line with or exceed with diocesan expectations.

Pupils make an exceptionally good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. As the school is on a split site a buddy system is in place where classes from each site come together to attend parish Mass each week where older and younger pupils sit with their buddies. This leads to a sense of community and friendship. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the School and Eco Councils and as Pupil Chaplains. They are aware of needs in the wider world and are given opportunities to support local, national and international charities including help for the refugees in Calais, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, Anchor House and Cafod. Pupils understand that the teachings of Jesus underpin their response to the needs of others. The school enables pupils to reach out to the local community through sending Mass cards to sick parishioners as well as visits to local care homes and hosting the annual parish Christmas dinner for the elderly. Links with the nearby secondary school to which most pupils transfer are excellent with students presenting the Passion of Christ to all pupils in Lent. Pupils are thoughtful, courteous, care for their school and each other. They are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. They also value the sense of friendship and belonging created within the school.

Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to participate in the school's collective worship. The school has a Prayer and Worship policy which helps new members of staff provide opportunities for pupils to take part in assemblies and lead class prayers. The appointment of a religious education champion helps staff and pupils to prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm. She also leads lunchtime prayer groups which are well attended. The school introduced pupil chaplaincy last year with eight pupils from Year 5. They play a part in all liturgical celebrations and have a range of responsibilities including the maintenance of classroom prayer areas. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year with its seasons and celebrations. They are able to pray in different ways and at different times. They use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, meditation, reflection and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. Traditional devotions are part of the provision including Rosary groups and the Angelus at noon for all Key Stage 2 pupils. Lenten Reconciliation services and the Stations of the Cross are part of the school's preparation for Easter. A nativity play and Christmas carol concerts for parents and parish are very well attended. Both priests from the local parish are regular visitors and say Mass, hear Confessions on the first Friday of the month as well as joining pupils on retreat days and residential trips.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need support. A dedicated worker from Brentwood Catholic Children's Society is available to support vulnerable children and families as needed. Pupils value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents value the care given to their children, the quality of education and the approachability of staff.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

School leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The headteacher supported by senior staff demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for its Catholic life. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development which she shares with the whole school community. Governors support her in this and are committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The development of Catholic life is seen as central to all that happens and gospel values underpin all decision making. Each year the first training day for staff and governors is devoted to the nature of a Catholic school and the values this should embody. Recently this has led to the introduction of the Jesuit pupil profile and virtues which are emphasised each term. Leadership demonstrates a strong

commitment both to improve in all aspects of education and to provide high quality care for pupils. Together the headteacher and subject leader have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues.

The senior leadership team has a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. Senior leaders are very good role models and all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Teachers are encouraged to acquire the CCRS qualification. The subject leader supports new teachers through help with planning and leading staff sessions on assessment. Each year she presents a comprehensive religious education action plan to staff and governors. This is part of the school improvement plan and is subject to rigorous monitoring. She also plays an active role at the Aquinas Trust religious education subject leaders' meetings.

Senior leaders monitor religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. The school has put in place strategies to give further challenge to the ablest children. Regular sessions for staff development ensures teachers are secure and confident in their delivery of the 'Come and See' religious education programme. Planning includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and six of them have the CCRS qualification.

Governors work closely with senior leadership and have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report, meetings with subject leaders and frequent visits. There are plans to give governors more detailed data linked to attainment and progress in religious education. Governors also attend staff training days linked to religious education and Catholic Life. The local priest in his role as link governor for religious education conducts observations of all aspects of the school's religious life along with members of the senior leadership team. Governors are very well placed to challenge and support.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Pupils are taught to respect other beliefs and the school is part of the Three Faiths Foundation. This involves working with a local Islamic school and visits to other places of worship including the local mosque. Leaders ensure pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of belief in modern life linked to British and gospel values. Pupils are given exceptionally good opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local community. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences and link them to the life and teachings of Jesus. Parents appreciate the good level of contact with the school. They are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings and reports. Curriculum letters include the religious education being taught and regular newsletters always include a prayer to be shared with all the family. There are plans to further support families by introducing prayer bags which will increase family engagement in the Catholic life of the school.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection lessons observed were good or better. Pupils are given an excellent start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. Teachers are well aware of their pupils' capabilities and plan their lessons with a range of differentiated activities to enable all groups to make good progress. High quality resources including class sets of bibles are enabling pupils to become familiar with scripture. In all classes observed pupils worked with interest and made good progress. Teachers respond very well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of many lessons observed. The effective use of teaching assistants is a strength of the school. Marking is positive, interactive and includes suggestions of ways to improve. Good assessment, planning and tracking support the learning and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is excellent. The school's religious education policy and staff handbook give clear guidelines as to how the subject should be delivered. The requirements of the Bishop's conference and the diocese are fully met and at least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. This is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level

of resources. Each class has a prayer table and an attractive religious education display area which includes pupils' work. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The 'Come and See' programme is enhanced by cross curricular links and the 'Journey in Love' scheme as well as retreats for years 5 and 6 and a whole school pilgrimage to Westminster Cathedral during the Year of Mercy using the London underground. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes very well to their spiritual and moral development. The support given to families through a range of extra-curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current high standards are likely to be maintained.

Collective worship at Our Lady and St George's is central to the life of the school. Assemblies and liturgies include pupils in the planning and contribute greatly to their spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings, drama, excellent singing and music. Pupils are given opportunities for meditation and personal reflection. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in church and school throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The priests from the local parish show a high level of commitment to the school and are frequent visitors. They support the school through Masses and liturgies as well as acting as chaplains on an informal basis. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions and devotions. There are very strong parish links through the commitment of school leaders and the local priests. At Masses pupils act as altar servers, readers and offertory takers as well as writing bidding prayers. These links enable pupils, families and parishioners to see themselves as one community.

The inspector would like to express her thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.