

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education
Collective Worship
and
The Catholic Life of the School



School: St Edward's RC Primary School
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Headteacher: Mrs Mary Brown
Chair: Mrs Janet Quinn
Date: 10 & 11 December 2013
Inspector: Mr MJ Gallagher

A Report from:
The Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service
Section 48 Inspection Team
50a The Avenue
Linthorpe
Middlesbrough TS5 6QT

INTRODUCTION

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

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edward's is a larger than average Catholic School situated near the centre of Middlesbrough. It is housed in a 1960's building that has been modified and extended over the years to provide a bright and airy learning environment for its 393 pupils. Outside space is limited but school leaders have been creative in maximising its use. The majority of pupils are from a White British background and, although the area is presently one of average socio economic advantage, this situation would appear to be changing as some of the neighbourhoods are in decline. Pupils enter the nursery with skills in Religious education that are broadly average. 7% of pupils are supported at school action, while 3% are supported through school action plus and 3 pupils have a statement of special educational needs these are below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 10% which is also below the national average. 85% of the teaching staff and 87% of pupils are baptised Catholics.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The inspector observed 7 lessons, 3 Acts of Worship. Formal discussions were held with the Head Teacher, Parish Priest, Chair of Governors, Religious Education Subject leader, parents and school council, while informal discussions were held with teaching staff, support staff and pupils. The Inspector considered all written information that was supplied by the school which included; letters from parents and Governors, parent questionnaires, self evaluation documents, and the previous Section 48 Inspection.

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Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	393
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	50
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	87%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations:	11.5%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0.05%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0.03%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	10%

Teaching Staff:

Full-time Teachers:	17
Part-time Teachers:	1
Percentage of Catholic Teachers:	89%

Support Staff:

Full-time Classroom Support Staff:	3
Part-time Classroom Support Staff:	11
Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff:	71%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	50%

Percentage of learning time given to R.E:

10% in all classes

Parishes served by the School:

Holy Name of Mary
 Sacred Heart
 St Francis'

1.OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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MAIN FINDINGS

St Edward's is an outstanding school.

Pupils enter the school with skills in Religious Education that are broadly in line with those expected nationally but leave at the end of Year 6 with outcomes well above these expectations.

Teaching throughout the school in Religious Education is outstanding; lessons are well planned, and expertly delivered at a pace that ensures all pupils are engaged and make excellent progress. Assessment and the marking of pupils' work is a strength of the school.

The Headteacher, appointed in September 2013, and Acting Headteacher in the previous summer term was formerly the Deputy Headteacher. She has already shown that her vision for the school is one where all pupils maximise their potential through excellent provision. She is supported in this ambition by a skilled and efficient staff and an engaged Governing Body. Relationships throughout the school are exemplary and truly reflect the school's mission.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Assessment: Continue to develop the rigour in assessing the levels of pupils' work, especially the higher levels so that staff are confident in their accuracy, by working with the Religious Education Adviser and other Catholic schools through the moderation meetings.
- Collective Worship: Further develop pupils' independence in planning and leading liturgies.
- Chaplaincy: Consider extending the role of the Chaplain to give additional support to the Religious Education Curriculum especially in developing the independence of pupils in leading Collective Worship.
- Realise the plans for creating a chapel/prayer room in the redundant Key Stage 1 ICT suite.
- Governors: Continue to provide support and challenge to the Headteacher to enable her to develop this outstanding school further.

2. PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account of variations between groups.

Pupils at St Edward's are proud of their school; they understand its distinct Catholic nature and know its mission. They were able to give examples of how they lived the school's mission: 'Live, Love and Serve' in their daily lives by being quick to forgive, be forgiven and able to support each other in times of challenge. They contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit hugely from it. They appreciated the efforts made by all the adults in school on their behalf and recognised that their voice is listened to. An example of this was how they initiated the recent fund raising to help those in the Philippines in the aftermath of the hurricane.

From roughly average attainment in Religious Education on entry to St Edward's, pupils achieve standards above expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and continue this rate of outstanding progress throughout Key Stage 2. All groups; male and female, Catholic and those of other traditions, gifted and talented and those with Special Educational Needs achieve equally well. This is a result not only of the outstanding teaching and learning that takes place but also because of the wonderful sense of community that permeates every facet of the school: parents talked of the, 'sense of community'; the Parish Priest talked of the 'bond between Parish and school' and how the Parish would be a poorer place without it; school staff spoke of the invaluable support the school received from parents and Parish. This impacts not only on the relationships within the school but also on pupils' attitudes towards the wider world ; their response to the disaster in the Philippines was not simply an act of giving but one of responsibility where the pupils saw it as their duty to come to the aid of those in need.

Pupils' response to, and their participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. They are reflective and respectful in assemblies and class worship. They are taught to plan their own acts of worship from Year 2 onwards. Older pupils are familiar with scripture and are able to choose passages to match particular purposes. All pupils are encouraged to compose, write and share their own prayers in a range of settings and are proficient at planning their own liturgies using the prompts 'Gather', 'Word', Response and 'Mission'. They are well placed now to meet the challenge of managing their own liturgies without adult intervention or support.

Singing is an integral part of pupils' lives at St Edward's; there are successful choirs in Key Stage 1 and 2. The Key Stage 2 choir is renowned locally and have been invited to sing in an opera in both Durham and Middlesbrough Cathedrals in 2015. Pupils were heard singing well during their class liturgies, but the singing heard at the Key Stage 1 Nativity was delightful and thoroughly enjoyed by a hall packed with parents.

• The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

3. PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The teaching of Religious Education in St Edward's is consistently of the highest standard. Teachers provide pupils with exciting, stimulating well-structured lessons that engage them in their learning and encourage them to achieve. This was evident throughout the school. In the Early Years and Foundation Stage the children's learning on Advent was expertly organised through play by having one group being a human travelling crib, another organising a party, another creating a banner while the final group painted a mural outside. The excitement of the children was palpable yet the atmosphere was calm and organised. In Year 6 a lesson opened with a lively discussion on the symbolism found in Paolo de Matteis' painting of the Annunciation and ended with the pupils showing their understanding of the term, 'the Word became flesh'. As a result of the teacher's detailed subject knowledge, the pace of the lesson and her high expectations, the pupils worked hard and made excellent progress.

Teachers have welcomed the recent introduction of the 'Come and See' programme and say that it has contributed to the high standards achieved by pupils but they are confident in their own abilities to adapt the programme to match the needs of their pupils. Their lessons are very well-planned, based on prior learning with tasks differentiated to enable all ability groups to make progress. Those pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress. One parent described the care and support given to her child by the school as 'fantastic'. A rigorous system for tracking pupil progress is well established and monitored ensuring all pupils make progress through each Key Stage.

The marking, by teachers, of pupils' work is a strength of the school and is instrumental in maintaining pupils' exceptional learning and progress. The marking policy is consistently adhered to across the school with teachers celebrating what is good about the work and clearly highlighting areas for development. Pupils are given time to reflect upon their work and respond to their teacher's comments. Their books are neat and work is well presented showing that they are proud of their efforts.

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school and is given the highest priority. Acts of Worship are well planned, prayerful and reflective enabling pupils to contribute and participate. Pupils are encouraged to plan their own liturgies from Year 2 onwards and are now well placed to becoming independent.

The provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest priority. The learning environment is attractive and well ordered. Each classroom has a 'Sacred Space' and display reflecting the current learning topic. Attractive lettering is used throughout the school and is very effective in communicating with pupils; from the Mission Statement in the entrance, the Golden rules in Year 1 to Nelson Mandela 'Let your light shine', pupils knew where they were and why they were there.

• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	1

4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

How effective leaders, Managers and Governors are in developing the Catholic life of the school

The duty of fulfilling the Catholic mission of St Edward's is given the highest priority by school leaders with the development of pupils' spiritual and moral development at its centre. The Headteacher attributes the outstanding nature of the school to the, 'collaborative responsibility of the staff'. Although inspectors would agree that this is true but only in part, it is the leadership that the Headteacher provides that enables this cohesive staff to be so effective. It is her vision and drive for the highest possible standards in every aspect of school life for every child that makes the difference. This was evident in discussion with the parents. One parent stated, 'This has always been a successful school but since the Headteacher appointment at Easter it has taken on a whole new dimension'. Another said, 'The school is more open and more accommodating now, we feel more part of it.'

The efficient and skilled Religious Education subject leader is supported in her role by a dynamic Senior Leadership Team that includes the Headteacher. Together they are instrumental in maintaining the outstanding teaching and learning throughout the school. The comprehensive tracking system allows them to monitor the progress of individual pupils and to make appropriate intervention when necessary. Lesson observations enable good practice to be shared and book scrutinies ensure that the marking policy is adhered to and used consistently throughout the school. Teaching staff are kept informed of current changes to the Religious Education curriculum and access to appropriate training is made available to them. The high expectations for pupils' attainment evident in the school are a result of the efforts of this team and, as a result, progress for all pupils is continually improving.

The knowledgeable and supportive Governing Body are committed to ensuring the provision of high quality teaching in Religious Education and promoting St Edward's as a vibrant Catholic community. Governors are knowledgeable because of the detailed termly reports they receive from the Headteacher in addition to reports from individual governors who have subject links as well as information received from school visits and newsletters. The Chaplain is also the Religious Education governor which allows her to have a greater insight into the work of the school enabling her to give the Governing Body first hand report of developments in Religious Education. Her role as Chaplain makes an invaluable contribution to the Catholic Life of the school; she organises prayer groups at relevant times of the year, oversees the work of the school Council, provides pastoral support and advice to staff and is a valuable link with the Parish.

St Edward's is an outward looking school recognising that working collaboratively with other schools is a strength. This is evident in the strong links that exist with Trinity Catholic College and Trinity Partnership that include all the Catholic primary schools in Middlesbrough. Members of the school council have spent time observing their counterparts in another school with the aim of improving their own practice and the E-Pals extended club give pupils a world-wide view.

The school's capacity for continued improvement is outstanding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	1