



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 118764

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School
Dane Park Road
Ramsgate
Kent CT11 7LS

Inspection date: 2 July 2015

Chair of Governors:	Mrs Claire Turner
Headteacher:	Mr John Letts
Inspectors:	Mr Stephen Beck Mrs Angela O'Connor

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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Ethelbert's school is voluntary aided and was established 87 years ago. It is situated in the Thanet Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Kent Local Authority. The principal parish which the school serves is St Ethelbert and St Gertrude, Ramsgate and Minster. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics has slightly increased to 55%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all key stages.

The school takes pupils from 3 to 11 years from the recognised most deprived area of Kent. The number of pupils currently on roll is 239. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 31% of pupils receive extra support in class with two pupils having statements of special educational needs. Most pupils are of white British Heritage, although the proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is larger than the national average, with the majority originating from Eastern Europe. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and are also at early stages of learning the language.

Date of previous inspection:

29/06/2010

Overall Grade:

2

Key for inspection grades

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

St Ethelbert's continues to be a good school whose Catholic ethos is manifest throughout the life of the school. Leadership is effective and focussed with a strong emphasis on the Catholic life of the school. The Headteacher has an ambitious, clear and exact vision for the Catholic life of the school. Although only 55% of the pupils are baptised Catholics the school retains a very strong Catholic ethos. All members of staff are committed to the faith life of the school and are united in their quest to provide the best opportunities for pupils' academic, social, physical, spiritual and moral development. Therefore outcomes for pupils' are good. They are successful learners, behave extremely well and are keen to do well.

Pupils of other faiths and Christian denominations contribute greatly to the spiritual life of the school through their respect for religious practice. The school's capacity for sustained improvement to the Catholic life of the school is excellent. The Headteacher has maintained and built on the good Catholic ethos that has been a strength of the school for many years. The Mission Statement is displayed around the school. Very good religious artefacts, signs and symbols, displays and prayer tables all look fresh and well cared for.

Issues that were raised at the time of the last inspection around the areas of Collective Worship, teaching and learning have been addressed. The issue of assessment is appropriately 'work in progress' with which the school is successfully developing in partnership with the Deanery cluster.

The school benefits from its close proximity to the parish church and the excellent support given to the school by the Parish Priest. He is a regular visitor to the school supporting at a curriculum level in addition to providing a valued chaplaincy role to the whole school community.

The governors are totally committed to the continuing development of the school and the welfare and education of all its pupils and are ably led by an effective Chair of Governors.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Continue to develop differentiation by task to ensure that all teachers plan a range of activities to meet the needs of different learners, in particular the more able. This could be developed via a staff meeting at the beginning of each topic to plan tasks together that would further support and develop staff.
- Develop a greater clarity of planning and assessment procedures.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is very good not least because of its diversity of intake. Opportunities to participate in the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school are provided through the School Council and during Religious Education lessons. Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their 'school family' and they all strive to do their best to promote the strong ethos within their school family and in the wider community. They are well aware of the needs of others, both locally and globally, seeking to support them through awareness raising assemblies and fundraising. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities provided by school for their personal support and development. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth. An effective programme for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) allows pupils to develop and foster excellent understanding, appropriate to their age. Pupils are very proud of their religious identity, deeply valuing the Catholic tradition of their school and its links to the parish community. They are regularly involved with parish and diocesan celebrations, benefitting from staff involvement in school and parish activities.

Pupils are very supportive of each other and both pupils and parents stress the family nature of the school. Parents are supportive of the school and described the exceptional levels of support provided by the school to families facing difficult circumstances. A parent wrote, "The school promotes love, compassion, support, community and understanding. The pastoral care of the school and children goes above their duty."

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils' achievements in and enjoyment of Religious Education are good. Their attainment in Religious Education is reflected in the progress they make in relation to their starting points and capabilities. On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. It is to the school's credit that there is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender or the outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their ages and stages of development in each key stage.

Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate and this is a focus of teaching at the school. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is good, as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. They are encouraged to work both independently and collaboratively and are anxious to learn and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills as they move to become independent learners.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

St Ethelbert's is a prayerful community. Pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy leading and taking part in various forms of Collective Worship, as they like to have the opportunity

to share in prayer together. During worship pupils listen, join in and respond in a sincere and respectful way. A well prepared programme of assemblies, liturgies and Masses ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to participate with increasing confidence and independence, appropriate to their age and stage of development. They use scripture, music, silence and artefacts confidently and imaginatively to create very spiritual acts of worship. Pupils said that it is an honour and privilege to be involved in assemblies and Masses.

There is a strong sense of respect for other faiths. Pupils learn about different faiths within curriculum Religious Education (Judaism and Islam) as well as in other curriculum subjects.

The pupils have a rich and varied experience of Catholic life. Each Tuesday a class from Years 2 to 6 join the parish to celebrate Mass providing prayers and undertaking the reading of the day. They lead hymns and reflection at the end of the Mass. Weekly prayers for all classes from Reception to Year 6 take place in church with a priest from the parish. With the school having a high proportion of Polish families it is beneficial to have the opportunity to celebrate First Holy Communions and the Sacrament of Reconciliation in both English and Polish. Following a Polish Day, parents brought into school Polish prayers and traditions of Catholic faith and shared them with all the pupils.

Lunchtime Rosary is said in May and October and the pupils along with a member of staff are raising funds for a Rosary walk along the path to the church. The statue of Our Lady has already been purchased. The pupils arrange cream teas for the parish in the summer term and every Christmas the school choir sings in the local nursing homes. The school is supporting the St Augustine parish initiative and the pupils have visited the Abbey and St Augustine's house. Pupils have visited Aylesford for a retreat and the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership (KCSP) Mass and in addition governors have accompanied pupils to the Diocesan day at Twickenham.

A good assembly on the theme of transition saw pupils involved and engaged throughout. Good work was undertaken on the topic of feelings at a time of transition and included photographs of the Year 6 pupils when they were in Year 3. The pupils reacted to these with affection and appreciated from these the idea of change. Good use was made of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). An opportunity was provided for spontaneous prayer and the assembly would have been further enhanced through a link with scripture and an opportunity to sing.

A parent commented, "I love the link between the school and the Church. It helps keep the faith in our family strong."

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers promote and evaluate the provision for Religious Education in school. The planned development of the tracking of pupils' attainment and achievement will strengthen improvement to outcomes for pupils. This will provide valuable, more robust data that will identify trends, progress and attainment for individual groups. It will also assist identification of any gaps in provision. There is a regular programme for the monitoring of teaching and learning with appropriate feedback and support being given as necessary. Professional development opportunities are provided and there is a commitment to ongoing professional development to enable all staff to gain secure subject knowledge and further develop their skills in teaching Religious Education. The Headteacher is currently studying for an MA in Catholic Leadership at St Mary's, Twickenham. Assessment information is collated by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team. The subject leader and Headteacher guide Religious Education very well.

On entering St Ethelbert's all pupils are given a St Francis crucifix which is paid for by the school's Parents Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) and the parish. Each class is assigned a prayer card and picture to take home building up a set of seven over their years in the school from Reception to Year 6. The prayer cards build up in reading difficulty through the school. At the end of Year 6 each child is presented with a 'Good News' Bible as recommended by the local Catholic Secondary School.

The governors are very good in their role and have a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They both challenge and support the school to be the 'very best' it can. The Deputy Headteacher, who is Religious Education leader, took a group of pupils from Year 5 to Canterbury Christ Church University for a SACRE day 'Knowing You, Knowing Me'. There they met representatives from other faiths and the pupils described the day as 'fabulously interesting'. A group of Year 6 pupils went to Aylesford for a Diocesan Mass earlier this year with these experiences being fed-back to the other pupils. It is planned for a whole class to go to the upcoming celebration of Catholic education in Kent.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school. The Religious Education Co-ordinator is committed and enthusiastic in leading Religious Education. She leads her subject with dedication. She attends regular training and updates provided by the Archdiocese.

In her role she shows dedication and commitment in driving forward new initiatives and ensuring that Religious Education is a core subject in school. She communicates with the Headteacher, staff, parents and governors. Well produced documentation guides aid all staff in the delivery of the subject. Revisiting policies relating to Religious Education will ensure that they continue to reflect and suit the needs of the school. Governors receive regular updates from the Religious Education Co-ordinator and are aware of standards at

St Ethelbert's. As assessment continues to be developed this data will better reflect the overall standards for this area. The school would benefit from a more detailed monitoring of planning, teaching and learning. Recent changes in the pupil report format has ensured Religious Education is commendably in a prominent position within formal written reports to parents.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

The inspection took place on the school's transition day. This saw Year 6 pupils off site visiting their secondary schools, new reception pupils and parents visiting and the other classes moving up to their new classes. The school had chosen to have classes observed undertaking a review of the school's Mission Statement and framing it in their own words. In lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Learning objectives were prominent and appropriately revisited. Classroom management was of a high order and pupils showed interest and engagement. Good use was seen of strategies such as 'thumbs up' or 'traffic lights' to support pupil self-assessment. Pupils respond positively to teachers high expectations of behaviour which is well managed and as a result they are consistently on task. Learning was further enhanced by the good use of teaching assistants and their skills in offering discreet support to individuals or groups of pupils. Lessons were well paced overall although attention needs to be given to ensuring more able pupils are fully stretched. Opportunities for independent learning and research would support this development.

The teaching seen was largely teacher led and would benefit from a less didactic approach. Although tasks in workbooks were differentiated by outcome the next stage of development is to secure more consistent differentiation by task in order to meet the needs of all learners.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The extent to which Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good. The curriculum meets pupils' needs very well. Religious education is clearly seen as a core curriculum subject in this school. Using 'The Way, The Truth and The Light' programme the school meets the requirements of the 'Religious Education Curriculum Directory'. Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes which ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education which fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.

Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Teachers are working to develop strategies to enrich pupils' learning. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate and purchases suitable resources in support. A good budget is allocated for the subject. The decision to move towards a creative curriculum is providing opportunities for children to experience the awe and wonder of creation and cross curricular links are being made which would be worth further developing. Vibrant displays around the school are linked to the curriculum and celebrate work. Enrichment activities such as sports, music and games have a positive impact on the curriculum, promote respect for the gifts and talents of each individual and help to raise self-esteem.

The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their learning and a number of visitors serve to enhance the curriculum. The Religious Education policy has a specific plan for teaching other faiths and each year when pupils learn about the Jewish faith there is an assembly from a local Rabbi as a starting point.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

Collective Worship is central to the life of St Ethelbert's, where pupils participate with reverence and enthusiasm. Themes chosen for Collective Worship show a deep understanding of the liturgical year and give opportunities for children to experience prayer in a range of settings. Parents, carers and extended family are actively encouraged to join their children in acts of worship and they commented positively on how they are made to feel welcome. Everyone in the school community is passionate about ensuring pupils have high quality prayer experiences.

One foundation governor is a deacon. The Parish Priest attends all governing body meetings and frequently visits the school. He has regular contact with pupils, parents and the community. The school works in harness with the parish, which is on the same site, to support and evangelise the local area, through caring support for families. The parish has built a private path link direct to the church allowing more frequent visits to the church with the school having its own access key. There is an annual timetable of class Masses in church and prayer sessions in the afternoon.

Pupils are beginning to have more input into their services by writing and choosing hymns, psalms and prayers. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration, for example Friday's Golden Assembly led by the Chair of Governors. Weekly Monday and Friday worship for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are led by the Headteacher, Deputy and other staff. On other days Collective Worship takes place in class in a less formal way at the beginning of the day to allow the class to reflect in a smaller group.