



EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

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Interim Monitoring Visit

St Laurence Catholic Primary School, Cambridge

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Since the last section 48 inspection which was in March 2014, the headteacher and half the senior leaders have changed. The school has increased to 11 classes and currently has 282 pupils, of which 72% are Catholic. The percentage of Catholic staff is 79%. A third of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups with 40% speaking English as an additional language. Progress is consistently monitored for all pupils and the majority achieve the expected attainment with many pupils achieving higher particularly at the end of key stage 2. The budget for Religious Education during the last two years has been in line with that allocated to other core subjects.

The interim monitoring visit included meetings with the headteacher, the deputy with pastoral responsibility and RE subject leader to discuss improvements since the last Diocesan Inspection in the Catholic Life of the school, teaching of RE and Collective Worship; with a learning walk throughout the school to observe RE in all classes; a meeting with a group of year 6 pupils; scrutiny of pupils' RE books and RE data; and a short feedback meeting with the Senior Leadership team. The visit lasted four hours.

Since the last inspection the school has maintained its strong Catholic identity which permeates its daily life. It has not remained complacent but strives effectively for continuous improvement. The committed and enthusiastic leadership of the senior staff and teachers ensures that pupils are aware of the Catholic faith and have an understanding of how to live this out in their lives. Pupils know the school's core values of Care, Courtesy and Concern and can describe how striving for these impacts on them personally, as well as the school's community cohesion. Pupils' personal and spiritual development is reflected in their very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils undertake many responsibilities and have planned initiatives to raise money for their Lenten charity. Pupils are proud of their school and one said "Everyone's opinions and ideas are valued". They praised the staff who listen to them, encourage their learning and develop in them pride in being Catholic. Pupils' RE books are very well presented and reflect cross curriculum and creative learning activities. The school's many attractive RE displays evidence the importance of the school's religious character. Prayer, worship, sacramental celebration and Religious Education all continue to have a very high profile in the school's life.

(The areas to improve from the last inspection are in italics).

To develop RE marking so that pupils are given opportunities to respond to the teacher's comments so improving their work and extending their learning.

This development is ongoing. RE marking is in line with the school's marking policy. Pupils are given verbal feedback and are offered opportunities to extend their learning through extension activities and focused questioning. The school plans to review the marking policy which will include clear guidance on the number and type of written next steps in RE.

Embed RE assessment procedures to track pupils' progress and analyse the results so that underachievement can be identified, action taken and standards raised.

The school has responded well to this issue. The new diocesan standards of assessment in RE are at present being piloted by each class in the school. When finalised, these will be recorded using digital tracking and analysed thoroughly as before.

Increase pupils' involvement in planning worship by providing opportunities for groups of pupils to prepare and present short acts of worship to younger children.

This development has been fully implemented. Each week, as part of Collective Worship planning, small groups of pupils from each of the older years, plan and present their class worship choosing a scripture reading, a hymn, and a focus message. They write the prayers and devised a symbolic response action for participants. During Lent parents were invited to these "Stay and Pray" sessions.

Pupils' ideas and opinions are sought in many areas of school life. ***The diocesan inspector agrees with the school that they should in future develop a systematic way for pupils to evaluate the schools' Catholic life and collective worship and take a lead in planning priorities for these areas.***

Governors monitor informally the religious nature of the school and collective worship on many occasions. ***The diocesan inspector agrees with the school for governors to devise more formal systems of evaluation for these areas.***

I would like to thank everyone at St Laurence school for such a warm welcome during the visit. Feedback regarding the interim monitoring visit was that it had been supportive and confirmed for the senior staff the achievements of the recent past and the future direction already planned.

Marion Betts, Diocesan S48 Inspector