



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: St Antony's Primary School
LEA: London Borough of Newham
Inspection Date: 13rd June 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: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 482
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: March 2013

School Address:
Upton Avenue
Forest Gate
London
E7 9QB

Tel. No. 020 8552 3670
Headteacher: Mrs A. Moore
Chair of Governors: Mr A. Corriette

Information about the school

St Antony's Catholic Primary with Nursery is a two form entry school in Forest Gate in the London Borough of Newham and part of the diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parish of St Antony of Padua Forest Gate with a number of pupils coming from adjoining parishes. There are currently 482 pupils aged 3-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 84%. There is a well above average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and 57% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average. Pupils from the school form part the official Commonwealth choir and have performed with the Commonwealth youth orchestra on many occasions.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Antony's is an outstanding school both in its pursuit of excellence in developing pupils' religious literacy and in its success in providing experiences in ways of Catholic living and believing. This is because of the dedication of the school leadership who are committed to the Church's mission in education. Pupil achievement and progress, the provision for Catholic life and the capacity for sustained improvement are judged to be outstanding. Prayer and worship are integral to all that the school does and opportunities for spiritual and moral development are interwoven through religious education and the wider curriculum. Pupils clearly understand and appreciate what it means to be part of a Catholic community. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models and have a vision for the whole school community which includes the well-being of parents and families as well as initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school. Pastoral care is excellent and shared by all members of the school community. Links with the parish are also excellent with pupils leading Sunday Mass through singing, as readers and as altar servers. Relationships are very good and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils and parents greatly appreciate the very many opportunities offered to develop a wide range of interests through before and after school clubs and lunch time activities. Parents also welcome the high standard of care, the Catholicity of the school and the way their children's prayer life is supported and developed. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment in religious education often exceed diocesan expectations.

The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2013 identified a number of areas for development all of which have been fully addressed. Since then standards in religious education have continued to rise due to a clear focus on staff development linked to subject knowledge and improved assessment which has informed lesson planning. The school has maintained a constant drive to move forward by improving the level of resources and investing heavily in teaching assistants which is ensuring that all groups of pupils make very good progress. Good relations with deanery schools have led to regular moderation meetings to share expertise and judgements. The school has put in place effective strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The dynamic and experienced headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community through her commitment to team building in all aspects of school life. Prayer and worship are woven throughout the school day and enhanced by the excellent level of support given by the parish priest who is also link governor for religious education. Governors are dedicated, well informed, have a wide range of expertise and are fully involved in the life of the school. Accurate self-evaluation enables the school to identify areas for improvement and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all pupils. The headteacher is joint religious education subject leader with the assessment co-ordinator. They are both well placed to support colleagues through monitoring, assessment and help with planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to consolidate the areas identified in the religious education action plan to ensure consistency across the school.
- Implement the 'next steps' identified in the school's self-evaluation documentation

Pupil attainment and progress in religious education are outstanding. The school carefully evaluates progress and standards and indicates that from a relatively low base pupils make good progress year on year so that by the time they reach Year 6 attainment often exceeds diocesan expectations. All lessons observed during the inspection had outstanding elements and pupils worked with interest and commitment. Cross curricular links are evident especially in Early Years where teachers provide a good foundation which is built on throughout the years. In Key Stage 1 tasks are carefully differentiated to enable all pupils to demonstrate their knowledge. This is extended in Key Stage 2 where pupils are confident in finding bible references and using them in their written work. Throughout the school lessons are engaging and creative. Behaviour for learning is excellent and pupils are well motivated and responsive. In conversation pupils said they enjoy their religious education lessons and like the wide range of activities. They have a very good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and are able to apply religious ideas to their own lives. Workbooks show coverage of the curriculum and indicate excellent progress made by all groups.

Pupils are polite and thoughtful to adults and each other. They make an excellent contribution to the Catholic life of the school through the way they help and support each other both in and out of the classrooms. The school motto 'Learning together in God's love' is well known by all pupils. They are given many opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of the School Council, 'Mini Vinnies', Religious Education leaders and prefects. Pupils are involved with several local, national and international charities including Children in Need, Cancer Trust, Cafod, Refugee and Migrant programme as well as 'Toilet Twinning' to aid children and families in need. Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as part of a global community with responsibilities for other people and the environment. They have close links with the 'Bon Conciel' in Paris which has led to the establishment of a 'Mary as Example' after school service and leadership club. Very strong links with St Antony of Padua parish make a major contribution to the Catholic life of the school and enable pupils to see themselves and their school as part of the wider Church. A 'Junior Theology' club is run each week by the parish priest and is very well attended. Pupils value the sense of community and belonging created within the school. Conversations with pupils indicate that they appreciate the many opportunities offered by the school and the help given by their teachers and other members of staff.

Prayer and worship are central to school life at St Antony's. Pupils take part in daily worship either in their classrooms or in an assembly. Liturgies, Masses and celebrations are carefully planned by pupils and staff and there are many opportunities for pupils to participate fully. Older pupils also plan and lead liturgies on a regular basis. In addition to regular Masses which take place each half term in the parish church, the school has taken responsibility for the music at a Sunday Mass as well as acting as altar servers, readers and the offertory bearers. This shows a high level of commitment to the parish as it involves staff and pupils in a session of preparation every Saturday. Music and singing are exceptionally good with musicians and an enthusiastic school choir which plays a major part in worship as well as contributing to special parish Masses. Pupils also experience traditional devotions including a Rosary week and a Marian procession in May. Years 4, 5 and 6 attend an annual retreat day to deepen their understanding of prayer and our faith. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Church's liturgical year with its seasons and celebrations. Older pupils are also able to make links between the sacraments and the life of Christ through their understanding of the gospels. The environment for prayer and worship is excellent. Each class has an attractive prayer table which is used as a focus for class worship. Pupils are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. They can use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, meditation and their own prayers, many examples of which were seen during the inspection. Pupils' own prayers are used in Masses, assemblies and class worship. Older pupils 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.

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. This includes the local priests and brothers from the order of St John who are frequent visitors. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and know that all members of staff are there to help. Pupils are involved in decision making and citizenship through the school council and value their school and all it offers. They know they are

respected, listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents speak very highly of the school, the headteacher and the care given to their children. They praise the excellent quality of education, the support given to their children's prayer life and the commitment and approachability of staff.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. The inspirational headteacher ensures that all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through staff meetings and attendance at diocesan led training. Good support is given to new and non-Catholic teachers. Two teachers hold the CCRS qualification and two more are currently undertaking the course. The effectiveness of leadership at all levels is outstanding. The headteacher is well supported by her senior staff as she demonstrates strong leadership of the school through the way she inspires and promotes the provision for Catholic life. She is deeply committed to excellence and achieves this by regular monitoring and a balance of challenge and support. She communicates a clear vision to the whole community which is affirmed by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The partnership between school, home and parish is excellent and families have been helped to access appropriate support for their needs. The leadership team give priority to Catholic Life and religious education in the school improvement plan and have developed a system of self-evaluation which is detailed and accurate. Together they have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education.

The headteacher and joint subject leader monitor religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. There is a school wide data base on attainment in religious education which enables tracking and effective resource provision to be made. They attend diocesan co-ordinators meetings and deanery moderation sessions with other local Catholic schools to ensure assessments are validated. New teachers are given a mentor and enabled to observe excellent teaching as well as help with planning and assessment. Strategies are in place to give further challenge to all groups of pupils. Leadership gives staff development a high priority and includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school.

Governors are very active in the life of the school and are involved with the review of policy and procedure. They work closely with senior leadership and have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are very well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report, feedback from the parish priest who is link governor for religious education and his frequent visits include learning walks and book scrutinies. They are in a good position to challenge and support effectively and attend diocesan and local authority training to ensure their skills are up to date. The local parish priest plays a major role in the life of the school by observing and evaluating provision as well as providing guidance and support to teachers. He also leads an annual staff and governor retreat day which is held to re-affirm the school's Catholic vision, evaluate provision and plan future improvements. All governors share the strong sense of the vision and educational mission of the school.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Other faiths are well taught and supported by teaching assistants and visits to other places of worship, including the local mosque. There are very good links with other deanery and local authority schools through participation in sporting and cultural events. Christmas and Easter productions involve the school orchestra, choir, dance troupe and drama club and are well supported by families and other members of the church community. These groups also entertain elderly parishioners at Christmas and other occasions. Pupils are given very many opportunities to develop a sense of service within school and to show compassion for others through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local and wider community. Older pupils are developing an understanding of the theology underpinning this work. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Regular retreat days are held for Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils and there are plans to participate in a pilgrimage to Rome as well as one to France to visit the shrine of St Vincent de Paul, the inspiration for the school's 'Mini-Vinnie' group. Parents are welcomed to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They appreciate the good level of contact with the school which includes regular questionnaires and curriculum information letters which enable them to support their children's education and faith journey.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is excellent. During the inspection lessons observed were good or outstanding. They are planned carefully with clear learning intentions and a varied range of activities which can include drama, role play, debate, discussion as well as singing, prayer and reflection. The school has made a major investment in resources including sets of bibles for Key Stage 2 classes which has led to very good familiarity with scripture. Pupils benefit from the high profile given throughout the school to religious education lessons. In all classes observed pupils were fully engaged and made very good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations, respond well to pupils' comments and take every opportunity to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was evident in lessons observed. Very good support by teaching assistants enables all groups of pupils to make progress. This is a feature of lessons especially in Early Years. Marking is positive, interactive and enables pupils to identify next steps in their learning. Very good monitoring, assessment, planning and tracking supports the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is outstanding and most effective in promoting pupils' learning. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to the subject. The religious education programme 'Come and See' supported by 'Journey in Love' and the 'Big Question' has ensured that pupils of all abilities make good progress. The headteacher gives religious education a central place in the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. Vibrant religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. 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 wide 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 or improved.

Provision for prayer and worship at St Antony's is outstanding. Eucharistic celebrations, prayer and liturgies are central to the life of the school. They are very well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection which was on St Antony's feast day the school choir, musicians and Year 6 pupils led a dynamic and powerful assembly on his life and legends connected with him. They explored the values he represents in a most engaging manner and the whole school community joined in joyful singing which included the school's own song. In class pupils were observed reading and writing their own prayers. Pupils take part in Reconciliation and Adoration during Lent and Advent. The learning environment is vibrant and colourful. Each classroom has a very attractive prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include children's work. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to Masses which take place in the nearby church. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions through participation in devotions which include May processions, the Stations of the Cross, the Angelus and Rosary groups. The enthusiasm which pupils show during collective worship indicates that they understand that faith is at the heart of the school.

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.