

Report of the Denominational (Section 48 and Canon 806)
Inspection of

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

St Louis Catholic Primary Academy

DFES No: 935/3318

URN: 139448

For Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



Chair of Governors: Mrs Julienne Whipp

Headteacher: Mrs Teresa Selvey

Denominational Inspector:

Mrs Marion Betts

Dates of Inspection: 15th September 2016

Date and grade of previous inspection: November 2010. Grade 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Louis Catholic Academy is a one and a half form entry school for pupils aged from 3 to 11 years. There are 345 pupils on roll, 82% of whom are Catholic. The school is situated in the parish of Our Lady Immaculate and St Etheldreda, Newmarket but pupils also come from the Mildenhall parish and surrounding villages. Almost 40% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with just over a fifth of pupils with English as a second language. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.

Grade: 1

St Louis Academy is an outstanding Catholic school. The extremely strong Catholic identity permeates the school's daily life and very effectively promotes pupils' spiritual growth, positive attitudes and respect for each other. Pupils said "everyone cares for each other here". The headteacher is deeply committed to promoting the Catholic ethos of the school and this inspires all in the school community. Relationships within the school are very good and reflect Christian respect and concern for others. Gospel values are well known and impact strongly on pupils' decisions and actions. The diversity of pupils' backgrounds and first languages are fully recognised and celebrated, evidenced by the school's recent achievement of the national "Equality Award". Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Prayer, Mass and worship are of pivotal importance in the school's life. Staff are committed to the very high profile given to RE (religious education). Pupils particularly enjoy the reflection opportunities given during RE lessons which allows them to "feel closer to God". Pupils make very good progress throughout their school life in knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Fully embed the recently adopted assessment programme "Journey with Jesus" to monitor pupils' progression in RE knowledge, skills and understanding so that any attainment gaps recorded, can be actioned and rectified.
- Increase pupils' involvement in independently planning worship by providing opportunities for groups of pupils to prepare and present short acts of worship within their class setting.

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

Grade 1

The extent to which pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school describing it as a place "where everyone is friendly to everyone else". They appreciate the guidance the school gives them to lead a better life and respect others. Their behaviour is exemplary and they specially mentioned the need to forgive each other. The school's motto "Loving to learn and Learning to Love", prominently displayed in the hall's stain glass window, is well known and understood by all pupils who strive to achieve it in all areas of their lives. Pupils show concern for the well-being of others and often devise ways to raise money for charities of their choice. Pupils praise the friendly, caring attitude of the teachers who listen to them and accept their ideas, help solve any problems, are always fair, and make learning fun. Pupils are keen to undertake responsibilities and are given many opportunities to act on their own initiative and expertise. For example this term the Italian pupils are helping to teach others their native language. Older pupils support the younger ones well in many ways, particularly helping them

understand the procedures of the Mass. Pupils' achievements are recognised and valued. Pupils' ideas are sought and acted upon through the School Council. They value celebrating the wide range of religious experiences and enrichment opportunities that the school offers them.

All pupils respond extremely well to worship and the prayer life of the school. They listen attentively, participate respectfully and with ease, and appreciate the opportunities given for reflection which they describe as time for "growing closer to God and Jesus". Pupils' own prayers are valued and prayed. They create a weekly prayer that is shared and prayed within each class. Pupils greatly enjoy worship and particularly mentioned the lively songs which are sung extremely well and enrich the worship experience. Pupils are involved in planning and delivering parts of the Mass and assemblies in a variety of different groupings. A further development would be for small groups to prepare and lead their own short acts of worship. Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and enjoy experiencing its celebrations. Worship contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Pupils know RE is regarded as important and one described it as "a time when we learn what God wants us to do". Through it they develop a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. They are learning at a very good rate throughout their school life and achieve age appropriate RE levels of attainment with many achieving above national expectations. Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons immensely especially when given practical tasks such as drama, research and art to consolidate the learning. They also appreciate collaborative work when they share their ideas and opinions with each other. Pupils' respond well to the challenging questions asked during RE and their responses evidence their growing depth and maturity of thought. Work is very well presented and demonstrates a good range of interesting tasks.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS. How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school?

Grade 1

The headteacher, staff team and governors are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school. They communicate a clear vision for the Catholic ethos which inspires a strong spiritual purpose throughout the school. The cohesive staff team all strive to lead by example and support this vision. The school has not remained complacent after their last inspection outstanding grade but has continued its developments and new initiatives. Through regular monitoring activities the leadership has a good overall view of the school's strengths, and this provides a firm basis for areas of future development relating to RE and the school's Catholic life. Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are very supportive and keep themselves well informed about the work of the school through visits, attending worship, from the headteacher's reports, RE leader's reviews and as they monitor the on-going school development plan. Professional development for staff in Catholic education and RE is an on-going priority of the school. For example a large proportion of teaching staff have been encouraged to attend the CCRS (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies) course, the forthcoming module of which is taking place at the school. The previous RE leader has recently been promoted to a deputy post within another Catholic school. The school has a very good relationship with the diocese through attending its training days and by the headteacher being the primary schools' representation on the diocesan schools' commission. The school is a welcoming inclusive community where all members are respected and valued. Very attractive RE displays and good quality artefacts around the school confirm the Catholic identity. The school works in partnership with parents

who are invited to every celebration assembly and service. The school has strong links with the church through the close involvement of the parish priest and parishioners.

The RE subject leader has recently taken over the post but previously worked alongside the former post holder especially during the recent RE review and so she understands well her role and any developments needed. She is fully supported by the headteacher. This ensures RE remains a high profile subject. The RE subject leader provides support and guidance to the staff. All aspects of religious education teaching and learning are monitored regularly and a clear direction for improvement has been set. Pupils are assessed regularly and these results are now recorded on the school assessment computer programme in the same way as other core subjects. These assessments are now moderated both within school and through collaboration with the local Catholic partnership. This assessment data is linked to national expectations, but broken into sublevels so that pupil progress can be tracked in more detail. The RE governor regularly receive reports concerning the RE curriculum, the monitoring results and pupil achievement data. The budget provided is in line with that given to other core subjects. Religious education is well resourced. Christian visitors including clergy are invited to share their expertise.

PROVISION. How effective is the provision for Catholic education: Grade 1

The quality of worship, prayer and sacramental life of the school is outstanding and is integral to the school's daily life. Pupils experience a wide range of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship, such as, through the Pentecost party liturgy and the pilgrimage to Walsingham. The children learn a variety of traditional prayers, increasing in complexity as they progress through the school. The school week begins with an assembly of achievements of pupils' individual skills and talents, which is celebrated with the whole school community, and is a joyful and motivating experience for the pupils. Worship is well planned linking scripture and song to the theme. Visual presentations and drama are effectively used to promote pupils' interest and develop their thinking. A calm reflective atmosphere is created. Classroom prayer tables are attractive. Mass is celebrated in various different groupings either in school or at the parish church. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the school's sacramental life.

The quality of religious education lessons overall is very good with many outstanding features observed. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and lessons are planned well with clear learning intentions and high expectations for achievement. Teaching uses to full advantage visual presentations; open questioning; talking partners; lively pace; and practical outcomes, which all effectively motivate pupils, inspiring them to work with interest and enthusiasm. Differentiated tasks are set that allow all pupils to achieve. Formal assessments of topic understanding are undertaken regularly. Assessments linked to national attainment levels and strands are rigorously undertaken using the "Journey with Jesus" programme. Following an introductory assembly, each year group undertakes an appropriate task. Judgements are made linked to clear criteria. Work is well marked and linked to the learning objective with praise and affirmative comments given, as well as suggestions and questions relating to how the outcome could be improved. Pupils are given opportunities to make these improvements.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is very good. At least 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education and follows the new East Anglia Primary RE Curriculum programme using additional resources to enhance certain areas of learning. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Curriculum Directory very well and links the themes with gospel values and Catholic traditions. Other faiths are studied three times a year with visitors invited to share their expertise. Cross curriculum RE learning is also planned and links made with other subjects for example Art, Craft, Drama, ICT, Literacy and History. In one lesson

the pupils' study of Ancient Egyptians' impotent gods was commendably linked to the nature of the Exodus plagues to reveal the powerfulness of God, the creator. The pupils termed this message as "you can't beat God!" A variety of creative inputs and motivating activities inspire pupils' maximum learning. This was demonstrated by imaginative resources being used with younger children to help them to understand and learn God's order of creation. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious commitment, for example, pupils were learning how the values connected to the Kingdom of God could be lived out in their actions and behaviour. The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Attractive religious education displays, which include challenging questions to encourage deeper thought, give added value to this core subject.

The inspector wishes to thank the headteacher, governors, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to her enjoyable and interesting visit.



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Letter to pupils explaining the findings from the Diocesan Inspection

17th September 2016

Dear Pupils

Diocesan Inspection of St Louis Catholic Academy

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. Thank you to all those pupils who spoke to me during your RE lessons, to the Head girl and Head boy who conducted me around your school and to those who came to speak to me during the afternoon. I was very interested in your views of your school and of RE. I particularly enjoyed being present at the celebration assembly. Well done to everyone involved.

Here are some of the things I especially liked:

- The strong Catholic ethos of your school that provides many opportunities for a wide range of prayer and worship activities.
- You are friendly and considerate to each other and are well cared for by your teachers.
- The school provides very good opportunities for you to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

I have asked your teachers to consider giving the older children opportunities to plan and lead in small groups their class worship sessions. I have also asked that the "Journey with Jesus" assessments continue to be analysed so that your progress in RE can be demonstrated clearly.

Thank you again for your help. I wish you the very best for the future,

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marion Betts
Diocesan Inspector