

EAST ANGLIA DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE



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Interim Monitoring Visit

St. Mark's Catholic Primary School, Ipswich

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St. Mark's Primary is a one form entry school serving the parish of St. Marks, Ipswich and also the parishes of Felixstowe and Hadleigh. There are 213 pupils on roll aged from 4 to 11 who come from a wide range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. 5.6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, 10% are identified as having Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) and the number of pupils with a Child Health Care Plan is 4. Pupils with English as their second language is 32%. There are 13 teachers at St. Mark's school with 6 being Catholic, one teacher holds the Religious Education (RE) qualification. 73% of the pupils are Catholic, 18% are from other Christian denominations and 7% are from other world faiths.

The interim monitoring visit included a welcome and a meeting with the headteacher; a tour of the school led by the head girl and boy and a member of the chaplaincy team; a work scrutiny; an interview with a range of pupils from Reception to Year 6; Collective Worship; a learning walk, observing RE teaching and learning throughout the school and a meeting to give feedback to the headteacher, chair of governors, governor for wellbeing, and the parish priest and RE governor.

The visit took approximately 5 hours.

RE Denominational Inspection September 2015 Improvements:

Continue to increase pupils' involvement in planning worship by providing opportunities for pupils to prepare and present short acts of worship within their class setting.

This improvement has been fully embedded.

Chaplaincy teams are well established and they regularly plan, prepare and deliver worship within classes and whole school assemblies. Worship led by pupils ranges from class prayers, Masses and liturgies, to Masses at St. Marks's Parish Church where liturgy is planned alongside the parish priest. This has led to stronger school/parish links. Pupils take a leadership role in preparing and leading lunch time prayer stations where everyone is welcome, promoting the prayerful and inclusive community of the school. The Year 6 Chaplaincy team have demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting initiatives from Pope Francis. They are working with the School Council to ensure 'Laudato Si' is continuously actioned. Banning single use plastics is a whole school initiative and successfully supports Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils have responded to the Call to Justice Social Action project by visiting a local care home and they are actively involved in promoting the Bishop's initiative 'The God Who Speaks' for the Year of the Word.

The school suggests and the inspector agrees to further extend the work of the Chaplaincy team to identify and develop opportunities of service within the community enabling them to carry out their mission as young Christians of St. Mark's.

The school suggests and the inspector agrees that teachers and leaders work alongside other colleagues in the CMAT to improve moderation ensuring that high expectations in RE are confidently identified, maintained and shared between the schools.

The inspector suggests and the school agrees that more able learners are further challenged in their RE learning by facilitating a deeper investigation into a self-directed area within the topic. Presenting and sharing their learning could also extend important oracy and questioning skills of other pupils.

The Catholic life including RE and Collective Worship is underpinned by the whole school community being committed to their mission statement. Everyone at St. Mark's benefits religiously, morally, spiritually and educationally by the Catholic life of the school. A key stage

2 child commented on the inclusive nature of the school and said 'Everyone matters, no matter where you come from or what you look like.' Relationships are strong and positive; wellbeing for all is seen and actioned as a vital priority. In discussion with the headteacher, leadership comes from a place of faith and is visionary for Catholic Education. It is well challenged and supported by an effective governing body.

Standards in all areas of RE continue to be maintained and are moving forwards. High achievement and good progress for nearly all pupils in RE is evidenced in workbooks, displays and pupils' views. Pupils, even the youngest, are able to articulate both their enjoyment and purpose for learning in RE, reflecting the proudly held view by leaders and staff, that RE is 'the core of the core'. It is clearly evident that teachers are dedicated to delivering high quality and meaningful lessons, where skilled questioning is used to deepen and explore views, knowledge and understanding.

Collective worship is planned and led with confidence by the Chaplaincy Team. Evidence around the school and in classrooms confirm that St. Mark's school is a prayerful community and that prayer in all its forms is embraced by all.

Feedback from the school was that the visit was a positive and supportive process.

Thank you for making me most welcome on the day of the visit and I wish the whole school community every success for the future.

Margaret Stewart, Diocesan 48 Inspector

