



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Local Authority: Havering
Inspection Date: 7th November 2018
Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

Type of School: Primary
School Category: VA
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 420
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: November 2013

School Address:
Hornchurch Road
Hornchurch
Essex
RM12 4TL

Tel. No. 01708 448430
Headteacher: David Leech
Chair of Governors: Alexandra Kearns

Information about the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is two form entry situated in the local authority of Havering and part of the Diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parishes of St Mary Mother of God, Hornchurch and Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park. There are currently 420 pupils aged 4 - 11 on roll. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number speaking English as an additional language. Almost 100% of pupils are Catholics with four children coming from another faith. 65% of the teachers are Catholics and seven have the CCRS or similar qualification. In addition, three teachers have completed additional qualifications in Catholic Leadership or theology. The proportion of pupils with special needs is lower than the national average. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities including after school clubs. After a period of instability and many staff changes, the new leadership team have put in place a rapid improvement plan which is ensuring pupils achieve well. There are close links with other deanery schools including those to which most pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic School

Grade 1

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic School. Strong and effective leadership gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the Catholic Life of the school. Prayer and Collective Worship are an integral part of the school's daily life and central to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Outcomes for pupils are improving with provision for all abilities and needs. Members of the senior leadership team offer very good support to new and less experienced teachers. The subject leader along with the Headteacher, monitors teaching and learning leading to improving standards of attainment. The parent body offers very good support through fund raising and involvement in the wider life of the school. Parents praise the good standard of education and the way the school supports Catholic values. One parent wrote, 'I cannot praise the school enough for bringing Catholicism into every lesson and not just as a subject.' Pupils say they enjoy school and appreciate the opportunities given to be involved in its life.

The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2013 identified areas linked to using data more effectively, sharing best practice, increasing expectation of pupils' involvement and developing the marking system. These areas have been well addressed and are constantly under review. The Headteacher is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and shares his vision with the whole community. Along with the subject leader he has put in place a Religious Education action plan which also includes Catholic Life and Collective Worship. The School's Mission Statement, 'With Jesus and through the prayers of Mary, we enjoy learning and celebrate our lives together', is well known and understood by pupils.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Continue to refine the assessment process to enable teachers to more accurately reflect pupils' attainment.
- Continue to support staff through in-service training to enable them to track pupils' attainment and plan lessons which will consolidate and extend learning.
- Continue to build on good Parish links and support pupils' faith journey.

At St Mary's, pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the School to a very great extent. They have a good understanding of the Mission Statement which is on display in every classroom. They are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities to develop the Catholic character of the school through membership of the school council, as Liturgy Leaders and as prefects. Year 6 pupils support Key Stage 1 pupils at lunch times as well as helping them when attending Mass. Pupils spoken to had a strong sense of belonging to a Catholic community and value the ethos of the school and the many opportunities they have to contribute to its Catholic Life through service to the school, including leading a Rosary lunch time club on a weekly basis. They understand that all pupils share responsibility for caring for each other and can link this to Christ's command to 'Love one another as I have loved you'. Pupils are also given opportunities to help the wider community through raising money for charities which have included the shoe box appeal, NSPCC, the local food bank and Cafod. They frequently suggest charities they wish to support; this recently included 'Diabetes UK' when a fellow pupil spoke about managing his condition. The school choir entertains patients at a local hospital by singing carols at Christmas and pupils also participate in the Diocesan Citizenship Awards.

Provision for the Catholic Life of the School is outstanding. The school's values underpin the behaviour of all members of the school community. A wide range of assemblies and Collective Worship are part of the school's provision as well as opportunities to attend parish Mass at the adjacent church before the school day begins. Pupils also visit the church to learn about the Sacraments, statues and aspects of Catholic Worship. All staff promote high standards of behaviour and are excellent role models for pupils. Parish links are good with school and Parish coming together for celebrations and fund-raising activities. The Religious Education curriculum is delivered through the 'Come and See' programme and is enhanced by the 'Journey in Love' scheme. Pastoral care is shared by all members of staff and a counsellor from Brentwood Catholic Children's Services provides support for pupils and families dealing with stressful situations including bereavement and emotional difficulties. In addition, the 'Rainbows' bereavement programme is available to support children who need it. A designated room has been provided for counselling and emotional support.

Leaders and Governors are most effective in promoting the Catholic Life of the School. This is demonstrated by the way self-evaluation and the school improvement plan are explicitly focused on Catholic Life and aim to enhance current provision. Leaders monitor and evaluate provision and outcomes in order to plan future improvements. Continuing professional development is offered to all staff and is engaging, well planned and effective. Subject leaders attend diocesan courses linked to the new Religious Education framework and assessment. Leaders provide models of good practice by demonstration lessons and support in planning and assessment. Governors make a highly significant contribution to Catholic Life by their commitment and involvement in school activities. In addition to regular meetings, they attend a development day and a staff and Governors retreat day which are used to evaluate provision and plan future improvements. They also spend time in school engaging with staff, pupils and subject leaders. They attend Collective Worship and whole school services and hold a 'Parent Forum' once a term to strengthen links with families. Governors also present a gift to all Year 6 pupils as they come to the end of their time at St Mary's. The Link Governor for Religious Education meets the subject leader to discuss current provision and future developments. The Parish Priest from St Mary Mother of God visits pupils in their classrooms and acts as an additional teaching resource particularly in respect of key times in the liturgical year.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**Grade 2**

Religious Education at St Mary's is good and improving. Pupils achieve well and enjoy their lessons. They make good progress and behaviour for learning is excellent. Pupils are given a good foundation in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. In lessons, pupils are actively engaged and keen to contribute to discussions. They enjoy a range of activities including art, drama, music and debate and say they like Religious Education. They are religiously literate and can think ethically and theologically through referring to Jesus' message when considering how they should act.

They have an understanding of what it means to be a Christian as well as knowledge of other faiths, enhanced by visits to a local synagogue and other places of worship. Workbooks are well presented and show coverage of the curriculum and a range of activities.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and adapt their teaching style to meet the needs of their classes. This ensures all pupils are fully engaged. The 'Big Question' was introduced three years ago and has helped to promote Religious Education as an enquiry based subject. Lessons observed during the inspection were at least good. Tasks are differentiated to enable all pupils to achieve well. Good quality resources including class sets of bibles are used effectively to engage interest and enable pupils to become familiar with Scripture. The marking policy has been revised to ensure pupils know immediately how to take the next steps in their learning. Teachers new to Catholic education are well supported and encouraged to undertake further training. Teaching assistants are used well to support individuals and groups of pupils. The Headteacher and subject leader are currently revising the assessment process in line with diocesan guidelines. They are also working to develop moderation of pupils' work across the deanery to ensure consistency in judgements.

School leaders and Governors are strongly committed to Religious Education and ensure the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with at least 10% of curriculum time devoted to the subject. The Headteacher along with senior leadership ensures that Religious Education and the Catholic ethos of the school are central to self-evaluation. Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including provision for professional development and resourcing. The subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning and has put in place a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluation which is leading to good outcomes for all groups of pupils. Shared moderation with other deanery schools is leading to a better understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. Governors' visit frequently and the Link Governor ensures the whole Governing Body is aware of developments in Religious Education. Parents are kept informed of the content of the curriculum through a termly newsletter which outlines the topics for the term including religious events and Holy Days of Obligation.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

Pupils enjoy many opportunities to participate in Collective Worship at St Mary's whether at Mass, in class or during assemblies. Collective Worship occurs regularly through the week, from the Monday morning Gospel assembly led by the Headteacher, through class-based liturgies which include pupils' own prayers and a Friday celebration assembly. Pupils are given opportunities to participate at Mass by singing, reading, drama and offertory celebrations, bidding prayers and acting as altar servers. The Church's liturgical year is celebrated through whole school acts of worship which includes the wider community in Advent, Lent, Holy Week and First Holy Communion celebrations. Pupils are familiar with traditional devotions, including the 'Stations of the Cross' during Lent. The 'Angelus' has been introduced at Key Stage 2 every day at noon as well as a weekly Rosary prayer group held in the church and led by pupils. Children are reflective and act with reverence during Collective Worship. 'Liturgy Leaders' assist in preparation for assemblies and there are plans to include more pupils in planning and leading Collective Worship in their classrooms.

Collective Worship at St Mary's is central to the life of the school and prayer is included in every celebration. Staff have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year which is reflected in assemblies and in classroom prayer tables. They are confident in leading Morning Prayer and key stage assemblies. During the inspection, a newly qualified teacher led a sensitive Key Stage 1 assembly linked to 'Remembrance.' She linked the poppy display with children's own memories of all the people who help them. Responses showed pupils had a clear understanding of the relevance to their own lives. They showed interest, concentration and singing was excellent. Parents are frequently invited to Masses, other celebrations and attendance is very good. Services of Reconciliation are part of Collective Worship during Lent. The school promotes strong links with the parish by encouraging

attendance at 'before school' Masses. The Parish Priest supports the school by frequent visits to plan liturgical celebrations and he also accompanies the Year 6 residential trip to celebrate Mass.

Leaders and Governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship by giving a high priority to the planning of quality liturgies and assemblies. They ensure all staff are given guidance on liturgical formation and the delivery of Collective Worship. Most Governors are active parishioners who hold key roles in the life of the Church and are known to pupils. Leaders are visible and committed role models for the whole school community and have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year with its seasons and feasts. School leaders and Governors including the local Parish Priest regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes.