



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: St Ursula's Catholic Junior School

LEA: Havering

Inspection Date: 23rd May 2017

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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

Type of School: Junior
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 247
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: May 2012

School Address:
Straight Road
Harold Hill
Essex
RM3 7JS

Tel. No. 01708 343170
Headteacher: Mrs C. D'Netto
Chair of Governors: Mrs K. Smith

Information about the school

St Ursula's Catholic Junior School is two form entry in Harold Hill in the London borough of Havering and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parishes of St Dominic's, Harold Hill, Most Holy Redeemer in Harold Wood and Christ the Eternal High Priest in Gidea Park. There are currently 247 pupils aged 7-11 on roll. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 82%. Just under half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups with 45% speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average. Most pupils have attended the adjoining infant school and a federation in the near future is envisaged. The school supports pupils and families by the provision of a wide range of after school clubs as well as employing an inclusion manager.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

St Ursula's is an outstanding Catholic school. The ethos of the school is immediately apparent and its faith life surrounds the whole community. Provision for Catholic education is excellent with opportunities for spiritual and moral development interwoven through religious education and the wider curriculum. Pupils are given many opportunities to understand what it means to be part of a Catholic community through opportunities to show responsibility and charitable fund raising. Leaders are excellent role models who set high expectations for pupils both in and out of class. Governors are experienced, well informed and well placed to challenge and support. Pastoral care is given a high priority by all members of the school community at every level. Relationships within the school are very good and parents welcome the high standard of religious education, the Catholicity of the school and the way their children's prayer life is supported and developed. Pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 meet or exceed diocesan expectations.

The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2012 identified three areas for development linked to sharing best practice in teaching, improving marking to enable pupils to make next steps in their learning and giving religious education greater prominence in the school improvement plan. These areas have all been addressed and since that time standards in religious education have risen due to careful planning and monitoring by the headteacher and subject leader. Moderation meetings are held regularly to enable teachers to share judgements with each other. The school gives a very high profile to religious education and enables new teachers to obtain the CCRS qualification.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the areas identified in the religious education development plan.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Attainment and progression in religious education are very good. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 attainment reaches or exceeds diocesan expectations. All lessons observed during the inspection were good and pupils worked with interest and commitment. All pupils spoken to said they like religious education and enjoy a variety of activities during the lessons. Key vocabulary is introduced and emphasised in each lesson leading to religiously literate pupils. In a Year 6 lesson pupils were studying Luke's gospel account of the healing of the blind man and reflecting on the response of the crowd and the man himself. When asked how the man would feel when his sight was restored one boy said, 'I think he felt really cleansed in his spirit.' Older pupils use bibles with confidence and are able to access scripture references to support their learning. All pupils work well together and have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age. They are able to articulate their knowledge and understanding of religious education in some depth and are able to apply aspects of faith to their own lives. The school's inclusion manager ensures that pupils with additional needs are well supported through differentiated activities and the help of their class teachers and teaching assistants. A combination of effective tracking of pupils' progress and 'next

steps' marking is resulting in rapid improvement for all groups. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate very good progress.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The mission statement, 'We celebrate God in all we do' is on prominent display in every classroom and well known by all members of the community. Pupils are given many opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider world through suggesting charities to support including Cafod, Child line and the local foodbank to which they contribute gifts at Harvest time. They participate in local events and are keen to take on responsibilities including as religious education monitors who write prayers each month for the school entrance, eco councillors and as playground friends. They publish a 'Footprints' magazine which helps to share information and achievements with their families and parishioners. Pupils highly value their teachers and the way they are encouraged to be the best they can be. As they develop, 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.

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. They are given many opportunities to write their own prayers and participate in assemblies and collective worship. A striking feature of the school is a 'Corridor of Prayers' which includes a prayer written by every child in the school. Each class begins the day with prayers and reflections and there are daily assemblies which offer a wide range of collective worship opportunities. Children's reading journals include a range of the traditional prayers of the Church which are well known by pupils. A Rosary Club is available for pupils during Lent and the month of May. All classes have an attractive prayer table which is used as a focus for worship as well as a display board which includes religious vocabulary and pupils' work. The Church's liturgical year with its seasons and celebrations are leading to a good understanding of links with the life of Christ. Reconciliation services are held during Advent and Lent. Pupils are developing the ability to pray in different ways and at different times. The parish priest visits regularly for school masses where pupils compose bidding prayers, take part in the offertory procession, read, and serve on the altar. Singing is excellent and a special 'Year of Mercy' hymn was composed by school staff and used throughout that year.

Pastoral care is very good and shared by all members of staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and know that all members of staff are there to help if they need support. Pupils value their school and all it offers. They know they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. The school provides individualised help for pupils who need additional support through the work of the inclusion manager. Responses to a recent questionnaire show that parents think very highly of the school and the care given to their children. They praise the quality of religious education, the support given to their children's prayer life and the commitment and approachability of staff.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher has a passionate commitment to the Church's mission in education and she is supported in this by senior leadership and all staff. She promotes a clear Catholic vision to the whole community. This is affirmed by governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for pupils. The School Improvement Plan gives priority to Catholic Life and religious education. The current system of self-evaluation is well evidenced, detailed and accurate. The headteacher and subject leader have an excellent knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues.

The current leadership has a very good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership of the school through the way she ensures that regular and rigorous monitoring leads to high standards in teaching and learning. She has ensured that her leadership team are prepared for additional responsibilities by sharing her vision for the school and disseminating it to all staff. She has put in place effective systems to develop and strengthen initiatives which lead to good outcomes for all groups of pupils. Together with the subject leader for religious education she has helped to produce a deanery moderation file of exemplar work which is assisting teachers in assessment.

Senior leaders monitor religious education by means of lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. The subject leader for religious education and liturgy lead share their knowledge with colleagues and also support other schools. Detailed planning and assessment across the year groups has ensured all pupils achieve well. Much emphasis is placed on staff development; eight teachers have the CCRS or similar qualification and all new teachers attend diocesan training. Teaching assistants who play a key role in the school have their own training programme linked to appraisal to enable them to play a full part in the Catholic life of the school.

Governors are actively involved in the life of the school through working closely with senior leadership and frequent visits. They have a wide range of expertise and an excellent understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report and their own observations. They join staff for training sessions and attend masses including the staff mass at the beginning of the academic year. They provide a high level of challenge and support and review all aspects of the School Development Plan regularly. They have accessed diocesan training to enable them to fulfil their role effectively.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths which are taught well. Each year group visits a different place of worship during the school's multi-faith week to support this part of the curriculum. Additional time has been devoted to the study of Islam to ensure pupils have a good understanding of their wider society. There are very good links with other schools including the secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to develop a sense of service through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local community. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are invited 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 half termly reports, curriculum information evenings, newsletters and the 'Wednesday Word' which enables them to support their children's faith journey. There are also good links with the local parishes.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection lessons observed were good or better. They are planned carefully with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. Teachers have high expectations and check pupils' progress regularly to inform the next steps in their learning. Pupils benefit from the high profile given throughout the school to religious education. In all classes observed pupils were engaged and made good progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and respond well to pupils' comments as they take every opportunity to develop understanding. Very good support by teaching assistants enables all groups of pupils to make progress. Marking is positive and enables pupils to build on previous 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. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education which follows the 'Come and See' programme enhanced by 'Journey in Love.' 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. Religious education is also enhanced by links with other curriculum areas including the choice of books used in English which underpin Catholic values and attitudes. Attractive religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to 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. In conversations pupils referred to the message of Jesus when they talked about charitable fund raising. The support given to families through 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 Ursula's is excellent. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual development. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. During the inspection a Year 3 class led an assembly on the theme of World Faiths. This featured the life of St Francis and his meeting with the Sultan. All pupils had a part to play and very many parents were in attendance. The assembly contributed very well to pupils' understanding of the role of religion in many parts of the world. Singing was excellent and music plays a major part in the prayer life of the school. Celebrations throughout the year include St Ursula's Day, Lenten Walk of Faith, Crowning of Mary and a Corpus Christi procession. In addition, pupils have Reconciliation services in Lent and Advent. An emphasis on care for creation is leading to pupils understanding that they have a role as stewards of the Earth. Pupils are involved in collective worship several times a day in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. 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 many celebrations and attendance is very high. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge of Catholic traditions through the collective worship provision in 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.