



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

**Name of School:** St Michael's Catholic Primary School

**Local Authority:** Newham

**Unique Reference Number:** 102773

**Inspection Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013

**Reporting Inspectors:** Derek Kelly and Patrick Moloney

**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:** 262  
**Appropriate Authority:** The Governing Body  
**Date of previous Inspection:** June 2011

**School Address:**  
Howard Road  
East Ham  
London E6 6EE  
**Tel. No.** 020 8472 3964  
**Fax No.** 020 8821 9157  
**Chair of Governors:** Paul Dennis  
**Headteacher:** Linda McSweeney

## **Introduction:**

The inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education (Schools) Act 2005 by inspectors appointed by the Diocesan Bishop at the request of the governing body of the school.

The inspectors acknowledge and are appreciative of the full support, co-operation and courtesy they enjoyed from the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils of the school both before and during the Inspection. The inspectors wish to express their gratitude to all concerned.

## **The focus of the Section 48 Inspection was:**

- Classroom Religious Education
- The Catholic nature of the school through;
  1. Worship
  2. Links with the Catholic and wider community
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

## **The Section 48 Report**

**St Michael's Catholic Primary School  
Howard Road  
East Ham  
London  
E6 6EE**

**Headteacher: Linda McSweeney**

**Date of Inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

## **Description of the School:**

St Michael's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the London Borough of Newham and in the Diocese of Brentwood. It is an average-sized primary school. It admits pupils aged 3 to 11 years and all the pupils are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The school serves the parish of St Michael, East Ham. The school has gained many awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark, International School Award, Sing Up Gold Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Primary Science Quality Mark.

### **Record of Evidence Base:**

Two inspectors were in the school for the equivalent of two inspection days.

- The study of documentation including the Self-Evaluation Form/Denominational Provision (SEF/DP).
- The observation of six lessons.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Participation in one assembly and class prayers.
- Meetings with the headteacher, Religious Education co-ordinator, Chair of Governors, School Councillors and pupils.
- Observations of Religious Education (R.E.) displays in the classrooms and around the school.

### **What the School does well:**

St Michael's Catholic Primary School is outstanding in its effectiveness as a Catholic school. The headteacher, senior leadership team, R.E. co-ordinator and governors provide outstanding leadership to the school's Catholic life and ensure all pupils are challenged to develop spiritually, morally and ethically. The dedicated headteacher is committed to the Catholic mission of living out the Gospel values of truth, justice, forgiveness and kindness, which she effectively shares with all the staff and pupils. Guided by the School Mission Statement of 'We love and follow Jesus as we work and learn together in our happy and caring community', the whole school community work together to create a safe, stimulating and prayerful learning environment which has a direct impact on the personal well-being and educational success of the pupils.

Religious Education is central to the mission of the school. The R.E. curriculum is fully implemented and based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education Programme, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese. The school will be introducing the recommended 'Come and See' Religious Education Programme in the academic year 2013/2014. The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught Religious Education. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) complements the R.E. curriculum, whilst provision for Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is comprehensive and the school has implemented the Diocesan Sex Education programme, 'Journey in Love' in conjunction with 'All That I Am' SRE programme.

Overall, the majority of teaching in R.E. is outstanding and nothing less than good. Lessons are well planned. In the best lessons there are clear learning objectives and an excellent range of teaching strategies are used, so that lessons are lively and pupils are fully engaged. For example, in the lessons observed, talk partners and drama were used to very good effect, as was Information and Communication Technology (ICT) through the use of PowerPoint presentations, picture prompts and appropriate questioning. This made the lessons interesting and encouraged pupil participation through discussion, whilst also reinforcing and extending their religious vocabulary. It

is evident that there are excellent links between the R.E. curriculum and the liturgical life of the school, as exemplified in an observed Key Stage 2 lesson which effectively developed pupils' understanding of the Concluding Rite of the Mass and how this should influence the way pupils live the Gospel values.

Teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure that pupils are well nurtured in their learning and pastoral care is impressive. The pupils benefit from high quality teaching in R. E. and therefore groups of pupils make good progress based on their starting points. Attainment is above average. The pupils' written work is regularly marked and the best examples contain both praise and guidance about ways to make progress and pupils respond to comments.

Assessment in R.E. is a high priority and the school uses focussed assessment opportunities at the conclusion of each of the 'Here I Am' topics, which informs the school of the progress of all pupils. The school is working to enhance its assessment and moderation procedures, so that assessment data can be used to provide more information about the attainment of groups of pupils, this will inform curriculum planning in order to improve outcomes for pupils of all ability levels.

Leadership and management of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school by the R.E. co-ordinator, headteacher and senior leadership team is outstanding. The R.E. co-ordinator ensures that appropriate training is provided to induct staff, so that they can effectively deliver the R.E. curriculum. She monitors planning and supports staff in their selection of suitable resources and strategies to enhance the provision of the 'Here I Am' R.E. Programme. A clear strategy has been prepared for the forthcoming introduction of the 'Come and See' R.E. Programme, beginning with staff training in the Summer Term 2013.

The school leaders are well supported by the highly committed governing body, which takes an active role in monitoring the impact of Catholic life of the school and R.E. curriculum on pupils' learning. The governing body has a very good understanding of the school and its needs. Governors demonstrate that understanding and their commitment through the frequent interaction they have with the school community. They are prepared to challenge and support the school in order to ensure that the education provided, in R.E. as in other subjects, is of a high quality.

R.E. displays and artefacts in the classrooms and around the school support learning and enhance opportunities for prayer and reflection. Each classroom has an appropriate focal point for prayer highlighting the school's Mission Statement and offers an opportunity for pupils to compose and deposit their prayers in a prayer box. The current 'Here I Am' R.E. Programme topic is promoted on display boards and is well used to support personal reflection.

The pupils willingly undertake a number of responsible roles, such as Prefects, Buddies, House Captains and representatives of the School Council. The interview with pupils and some members of the School Council revealed an articulate group of pupils with clear ideas about how they help the school and how the school supports them. The School Council is proud of its achievements in raising money for a variety of worthy causes, purchasing new playground equipment and improvements to the school dinner menu, to benefit the pupils. In discussions with inspectors, the pupils

were clear that difficulties of any kind could be quickly sorted out because there is always an adult about who can help to ensure that they are safe in school at all times.

Relationships in the school are highly positive and pupils are extremely courteous, respectful and friendly towards adults and each other. Overall, the behaviour of pupils is excellent because they follow the 'St Michael's Way', which is employed to promote the Gospel values through positively reinforcing consideration and respect for others. Pastoral care is impressive because it is based on the school's personal knowledge of the needs of their pupils.

Provision for prayer, collective worship and the liturgical life of the school is excellent because pupils have a reverent approach to their faith and show respect for other faiths. Collective worship is very well planned to reflect community celebrations, significant events and the liturgical year. Music is a liturgical strength of the school, as observed in the assembly and classroom prayers attended by inspectors, with pupils using their vocal abilities extremely effectively to enhance worship.

St Michael's Catholic Primary School values links with parents and carers.

Parents, who talked to an inspector at the start of the inspection, spoke very positively about how their children enjoyed being part of the caring, safe and happy community provided by the school. They appreciate the sense of belonging to the school, which is encouraged by the welcoming atmosphere, very good communication systems, including regular parental consultation evenings and invitations to attend assemblies, the annual Achievement Awards event in the parish church and school Masses. The strong partnership with home and the local parish nourishes provision and makes the school a supportive and inclusive community.

There is a proactive St Michael's School Association which organises social and fundraising events, such as the Christmas Fayre and International Night, to strengthen and support the school community.

There are close links with the Parish of St Michael's and the Parish Priest, who is a regular and welcome visitor to the school and his active participation at many levels helps to ensure that the school is a cohesive faith community. Class Mass, on a rota basis, is celebrated regularly, in addition to Feast Day Masses and parents and carers are invited to attend and are keen to accept the invitation. Pupils are given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent. The school actively supports the sacramental preparation programme offered in the parish, through relevant topics from the 'Here I Am' R.E. Programme.

Contributions to the wider community are through fund raising for charities, such as; CAFOD, Children in Need, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and Richard House. The school choir sings Christmas carols at a local home for the elderly and at the parish carol service. The school regularly participates at the annual Brentwood Diocesan Citizenship Awards.

All aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are very good. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Relationships throughout the school community are excellent as exemplified by the way older pupils look after younger ones. All pupils live and learn together harmoniously. There are strong local and

parish links. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities towards global development and are always ready to raise funds for worthy causes. The prayerful atmosphere in the school is established through well-prepared assemblies, which are attended by all staff and pupils and focused on the Gospel values and offer opportunities for quiet reflection.

### **What needs to be improved?**

- To increase the level of challenge for the most able pupils in order to more closely matches their abilities.
- To further develop rigorous Religious Education assessment and moderation procedures to enhance tracking, in order to improve outcomes for pupils.
- To fully implement the ‘Come and See’ Religious Education Programme during 2013/2014.

The Inspectors endorse the areas identified by the school for improvement in the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Form.

Overall, St Michael’s Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school with an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. It prepares its pupils well for transition to the local secondary schools and pupils fully understand the importance of appreciating the unique qualities of every individual in the local and wider community.