



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St. John's Roman Catholic Special School

LA: Essex URN: 115466

Inspection Dates: 25th March 2011

Reporting Inspectors: Sr. Jude Groden and Ms. Colette Dawson

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

Type of School: Special
School Category: Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils: 5 - 19
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 104 – 35 in 6th Form
Appropriate Authority: The governing body
Date of previous Inspection: December 2007

School Address:
Turpins Lane,
Woodford Bridge, Essex, IG8 8AX
Tel. No. 020 8504 1818
Email office@stjohnsrcschool.co.uk
Chair of Governors: Fr. Bob Hamill
Headteacher: Ms Jacqueline Sheehy

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 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 John's Special School,
Turpins Lane,
Woodford Bridge,
Essex,
IG8 8AX**

Head Teacher: Ms. Jacqueline Sheehy

Date of Inspection: 25th March 2011

Description of the School:

St John's Catholic Special School is situated in the County of Essex. The school was founded by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in 1897. The Sisters are the school's trustees. The school was closed in 1970 for refurbishment. It was reopened in January 1972 as a day school for boys and girls with moderate to severe learning difficulties with additional language disorders. The building which houses the 6th Form was opened in the year 2000. St John's admits pupils aged 5 to 19 years from Catholic families as well as from other denominations and faiths. The ethos is of a caring Christian community. Spacious playing fields and play grounds containing large play equipment contribute to the physical and social development of the pupils. The school maintains a high staff / pupil ratio.

Record of Evidence Base:

Two Inspectors were in the School for the equivalent of two inspection days.

- The study of pre-inspection documentation including the Self-Evaluation Form/ Denominational Provision (SEF/DP).
- The observation of complete lessons.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Meetings with the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher, the R.E. Subject Leader, the Chair of Governors and the School Council and the teacher who oversees their meetings and activities.
- Participation in a whole school Assembly in the school hall.
- Attendance at a choir practice.
- Observations of R.E. Displays in the R.E. Class room and around the school.

What the School does well:

St John's continues to be an outstanding Catholic Special School which displays many strengths. It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic identity under the strong leadership of its head teacher, committed governors, highly motivated staff, the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and pupils.

Religious Education (R.E.) is an area of high focus in the school. The **'Here I Am'** programme, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, is adapted and implemented in the Primary department of the school and appropriate schemes of work are taught at Key Stages 3, 4 and post 16. These include Connecting with R.E., AQA Entry Level Certificate (ELC) and ASDAN.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in R. E. is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are stated, explained and revisited. In the lessons observed, pupils were on task, engaged, highly motivated, challenged and enjoying their R.E. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils were enthusiastic and purposeful and worked well together. Relationships and class management are recognised strengths of the school.

Assessment in R.E. is consistent in all year groups. It is systematic, rigorous and informative. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own learning through focussed self evaluations. Positive feedback is given to pupils and this enables them to make progress.

The management of R.E. by the R.E. Subject Leader is excellent, she is well supported by the Head teacher. At present she is the only specialist teacher of R.E.

The School meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught R.E. for the Catholic pupils.

Collective Worship, liturgical celebrations, the celebration of major feast days are all strengths of St John's School. The liturgical seasons, especially those of Advent and Christmas and Lent and Easter, are high points in the School's calendar. The whole school Assembly which the Inspectors attended during the day of the Inspection was outstanding. It was a prayerful, reflective and interactive occasion.

St John's School promotes an outstanding and tangible Catholic ethos. This is subscribed to by all the stakeholders – the trustees, governors, the head teacher, staff, pupils and their parents. The School provides outstanding opportunities for the pupils to develop a strong sense of community through activities which engender feelings of loyalty and belonging. The School continues to develop strong links with other schools in the Diocese and the Deanery, in particular Trinity Catholic High School, Canon Palmer Catholic School, St Anthony's Primary and Loyola Independent School. The emphasis on community cohesion is excellent.

Displays and artefacts in R.E. and the 'Prayer Focus', in the R.E. classroom and around the School, are excellent.

St John's School values links with parents with every effort being made to improve and maintain communication with parents as their children progress through the school. The trustees and governors of the school are very dedicated, hardworking and supportive of everything the school does. The leadership by the chair of governors and school governance in general are both outstanding and major strengths of the school.

Pupils are given every opportunity to become responsible citizens. This is evident in their concern for each other and for those who are in need. This is particularly evidenced by the generous fundraising for the charities that the School supports.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is an outstanding strength of the School. Pupils have outstanding opportunities to attend clubs and go on trips, including residential visits and cultural visits to Belgium. The pupils develop a good understanding of different cultures from the rich cultural mix of the pupils.

What needs to be improved?

There is a need for the Mission Statement to be reviewed, the intention being to make it more child friendly. In addition the areas highlighted, for further development, by the Section 48 Self Evaluation Form need to be addressed.

Overall, St John's School continues to be an outstanding school which displays many strengths. It prepares its pupils for life as happy, well-adjusted young people who are a credit to themselves, their parents and their school. The School owes much of its success to the committed leadership of its head teacher and her committed staff and to the valued support and expertise of the trustees and governors.