



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

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

**LA: Essex URN: 115274**

**Inspection Dates: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010**

**Reporting Inspectors: Mr. Anthony Castle and Miss. Colette Dawson**

**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: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 209  
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body  
Date of previous Inspection: October 2007

School Address:  
First Avenue  
Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP  
Tel. No. 01279 425383  
Email: [admin@st-albans.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-albans.essex.sch.uk)  
Chair of Governors: Mr. George Reynolds  
Headteacher: Mrs. Anne Marie McCann

## **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 Alban's Catholic Primary School,  
First Avenue,  
Harlow,  
Essex.  
CM20 2NP**

**Head Teacher: Mrs. Anne Marie McCann**

**Date of Inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010**

## **Description of the School:**

St Alban's Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the County of Essex and under the Trusteeship of the Diocese of Brentwood. It is an average sized primary school and draws about two thirds of its intake from Catholic families in the mixed housing area of north east Harlow. The school, which serves the two parishes of Our Lady of Fatima and St Thomas More and the Church of the Assumption is very popular and is oversubscribed.

### **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 Religious Education (R.E.) Co-ordinator, the Chair of Governors, the vice Chair of Governors, the Parish Priest and the School Council
- Participation in two School Assemblies.
- Observations of R.E. Displays in the Class rooms and around the school.

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

St Alban's continues to be an outstanding Catholic School which displays many strengths. It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic identity under the inspirational and outstanding leadership of its Head Teacher who is very well supported by her Deputy and Leadership team, committed Governors, highly motivated Staff, Pupils and the Priests from the parishes.

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 fully implemented. The 'Before You Begin' element of the process needs to be securely embedded at the beginning of each topic. The staff clearly understand the **'Here I Am'** process and use it effectively to provide a high quality and stimulating curriculum. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is used effectively to enhance the quality of lessons.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in R. E. is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are stated, explained and revisited. A wide variety of teaching strategies were used to focus on the theme. 'The School Crest states "Not through me but through God" which reflects the catholic nature and ethos of St Alban's. As a Catholic School Religious Education is central to our teaching and we strive to maintain the highest standards for our children.' (Prospectus) 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. There is a clear assessment focus for each of the **'Here I Am'** topics which gives excellent evidence of **'Relate'** knowledge and understanding. Positive feedback is given to the pupils and this enables them to make progress. 'Next Step Marking' is planned to be introduced.

The leadership and management of R.E. by the R.E. Co-ordinator, is outstanding. Her leadership drives the assessment procedures used by all the teachers. She monitors R.E. lessons and is very supportive of all staff, teachers and teacher assistants.

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

Collective Worship, liturgical celebrations, the celebration of major Saints' feast days and the school's links with the local parishes, are all strengths of St Alban's School. The liturgical seasons, especially those of Advent and Christmas and Lent and Easter, are high points in the School's calendar.

St Alban's School promotes an outstanding and tangible Catholic ethos. This is subscribed to by all the stakeholders – Governors, the Head Teacher and her leadership team, the site manager, staff, pupils and their parents. 'The 'Every Child Matters' agenda is firmly embedded into every aspect of the school. 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 Deanery and beyond. The emphasis on community cohesion is an outstanding strength of the school.

Displays and artefacts in R.E. and the 'Prayer Focus', in the classrooms and around the School, are outstanding.

St Alban's Primary School values links with parents with every effort being made to improve and maintain communication with parents as their children progress through the school. In addition there is a weekly newsletter, website and parent mail. The School has a well established Parent Association known as the 'Friends of St Alban's' who arrange social events and fund-raising functions for the benefit of the school. The Ofsted Report (May 2010) states 'Care, guidance and support are outstanding and central to the school's inclusive ethos. The impact is reflected in the pupils overall well-being. Parents recognise the considerable efforts staff make in order to meet the different needs of pupils...' The Section 48 inspectors fully endorse this statement. The 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 work and role of the School Council and the generous fundraising for the charities that the School supports. The older pupils take on a variety of responsible roles within the school community.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is an outstanding strength of the School.

**What needs to be improved:**

There are no specific areas requiring improvement other than ensuring that the areas highlighted by the Section 48 Self Evaluation Form continue to be addressed. These include the embedding of The 'Before we Begin' part of the '**Here I Am**' process and the introduction of 'Next Step Marking'.

**Overall**, St Alban's Primary School continues to be an outstanding Catholic School which displays many strengths. It prepares its pupils so that they transfer to their Secondary Schools 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 strong and committed leadership of the Head teacher and her Leadership Team and to the valued support and expertise of her staff and governors.