



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: St Luke's Primary School

LEA: Harlow

Inspection Date: 21st March 2017

Reporting Inspector: Pamela Brannigan

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: March 2012

School Address:
Pyenest Road
Harlow
Essex
CM19 4LU

Tel. No. 01279 425383
Executive Headteacher: Mrs A-M. McCann
Chair of Governors: Mr G. Reynolds

Information about the school

St Luke's Catholic Primary School is one form entry in Harlow, Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of St Luke's and Holy Cross. There are currently 209 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 38% with the rest coming from other Christian denominations or other faiths. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest being White British or African heritage. A significant number of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average. Since the last inspection St Luke's has become an academy and is part of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi-Academy Trust along with other Catholic schools in Harlow.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Luke's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. These include very strong leadership which gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils benefit from good opportunities for spiritual and moral development which are part of the provision for religious education, prayer and collective worship. Senior leaders are excellent role models and the Catholicity of the school is evident in all aspects of its work. There is a focus on reviewing provision and improving resources as well as putting in place robust systems for teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is very good and shared by all members of the school community. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of school life. Parents praise the good standard of education and way the school communicates with them. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' standards of attainment meet diocesan expectations.

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2013 identified a number of areas for development and these have been addressed by the experienced executive headteacher and her leadership team. The school's documentation now has religious education at its centre and the use of assessment to track progress is embedded. The quality of teaching has improved with increased expectations in religious education and more opportunities for extended writing. The role of teaching assistants has been developed to the extent that they now play a significant role in supporting pupils' learning. Improved assessment and careful tracking have led to higher standards of attainment in religious education. In addition, the school's mission statement, 'Through God's love we learn together, grow together and achieve together,' has recently been reviewed and is well known by pupils. The subject leader who is also assistant headteacher has an excellent understanding of her role and is well placed to support colleagues. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has effective strategies to share good practice with new staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further refine the assessment process to ensure pupils understand what they need to do to reach the appropriate level of attainment.
- Build on current good practice to give pupils additional opportunities to plan and lead liturgies and collective worship.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Attainment and progress in religious education are good. Pupils work with interest and commitment, and say they enjoy their religious education lessons and appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. Behaviour for learning is good and pupils work well together whether in groups or pairs. Older pupils can work independently and use research skills to extend their understanding. In an excellent Year 5 lesson pupils studied part of Mark's gospel as a preparation for understanding Judas' motivation for betraying Christ. This was followed by a 'Conscience Alley' exercise where pupils' thoughtful and insightful comments indicated an ability to reflect on scripture from many angles. The school has made a major investment in teaching assistants which is ensuring all groups of pupils are well supported and make good progress. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their ages. Workbooks are very well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate good

progress made by all groups. Standards of attainment are in line with and sometimes exceed diocesan expectations.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including 'Mini Vinnies,' House captains and as prefects. All Year 6 pupils are prefects and have a range of responsibilities to support the life of the school. The newly established 'Mini Vinnie' group have planted and maintained a prayer garden as well as fundraising to support the school's twin parish, Regina Coeli, in South Africa. Many local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including Cafod, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and Race for Life. Pupils understand that the teachings of Jesus underpin their response to the needs of others. The school also enables pupils to reach out to the local community through taking part in local events including carol singing at the Essex Hub. Links with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer are good. Pupils are thoughtful, courteous, care for their school and each other. They 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. They also value the sense of friendship and belonging created within the school.

Pupils respond positively to opportunities to participate in the school's collective worship. They are eager to take part in assemblies and liturgies. During the inspection an assembly led by the subject leader and Mini Vinnies explored the concept of friendship and linked it to being friends with God. Year 6 pupils read their interpretations of the 'Our Father' which linked it to their own lives. Pupils are able to pray in different ways and at different times. They use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, reflection and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection through the class prayer books compiled by pupils throughout the year. Rosary groups are held in May and October and Lenten Reconciliation services and the Stations of the Cross are part of the school's preparation for Easter. Pupils participate in Masses as servers, readers, offertory and choir.

Pastoral care is good and given a high priority by 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 where to go when they need support. They value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents value the care given to their children and the quality of education.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

School leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The executive headteacher supported by senior staff demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for its Catholic life. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development which she shares with the whole school community. Governors support her in this and are committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The development of Catholic life is seen as central to all that happens and there is a strong commitment both to improve in all aspects of education and to provide high quality care for pupils. Together the headteacher and subject leader have a very good knowledge of areas for development in religious education and are well placed to support colleagues. All staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through meetings and attendance at diocesan led training.

The subject leader monitors religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. She works closely with the subject leader from the partner school in the trust to moderate and assess pupils' work. She also attends governors' meetings three times a year to give a full picture of religious education throughout the school. She has put in place termly sessions for staff development to ensure teachers are secure and confident in their delivery of the 'Come and See' religious education programme. Planning includes teaching assistants who play a key role in the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and four of them have the CCRS qualification.

The experienced Chair of Governors works closely with senior leadership and has a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. He ensures all governors are well informed

about the life of the school through the headteacher's report, meetings with subject leaders and frequent visits. The parish priest in his role as link governor for religious education spends a day in school every week and is familiar with all aspects of the school's religious life. Governors have an excellent understanding of their role and are well placed to challenge and support.

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 Christian denominations and faiths. Talks from visiting speakers ensure pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of belief in modern life linked to British values. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others 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 and link them to the life and teachings of Jesus. Parents are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings and reports. Curriculum information letters include religious education which enables parents to support their children's faith journey.

Provision

Grade 2

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is good. During the inspection lessons observed were good or outstanding. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. High quality resources including class sets of bibles in Years 5 and 6 are used effectively to ensure pupils are familiar with scripture. In all classes observed pupils worked with interest and made good progress. Teachers respond very well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of many lessons observed. The effective use of teaching assistants is a strength of the school. Marking is positive, interactive and includes suggestions of ways to improve. Assessment, planning and tracking supports the learning and progress of all groups of pupils. However, the assessment and levelling process would benefit from further refinement.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is good. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. This is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. The recent introduction of six house saints is enabling pupils to increase their knowledge of qualities valued by the Church. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The 'Come and See' programme is enhanced by cross curricular links and use of Cafod resources. Links with a school in South Africa assists in developing understanding of other cultures. 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. The support given to families through a breakfast club and other extra-curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. There is every indication that current good standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

Collective worship at St Luke's is outstanding and central to the life of the school. Assemblies and liturgies contribute greatly to the spiritual development of pupils. They often include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. They welcome opportunities to plan and lead collective worship and this is being developed by the school. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include religious vocabulary and children's work. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school and church throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The parish priest visits every week and supports the school through Masses and liturgies as well as acting as chaplain on an informal basis. Parents and parishioners are invited to Masses and other forms of collective worship. In addition there are strong parish links through sacramental programmes and pupils' involvement in Sunday Mass.

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.