



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

**Name of School:** Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School  
**Local Authority:** Southend-on-Sea  
**Unique Reference Number:** 115148  
**Inspection Date:** 14 December 2011  
**Reporting Inspectors:** Dr Michael Sutherland-Harper and  
Mrs Maureen Cosgrave

**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: 413  
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body  
Date of previous inspection: 2007

School Address:  
Manchester Drive  
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex  
SS9 3HS  
Tel. No. 01702 475689  
Fax No. 01702 475689  
Chair of Governors: Mr. J. McEvoy  
Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Sullivan

## **Introduction:**

The Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education (Schools) Act 2005 by two 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**

**Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School  
Manchester Drive  
Leigh-on-Sea  
Essex  
SS9 3HS**

**Head Teacher: Mrs Margaret Sullivan**

**Date of Inspection: 14 December 2011**

## **Description of the School:**

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in Leigh-on-Sea, near Southend-on-Sea in Essex and in the diocese of Brentwood. The school is a larger than average sized two-form entry primary school. The school serves the Catholic parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Leigh but also has a number of children from the surrounding parishes of St. Peter's, Eastwood and St. Helen's, Westcliff.

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

Two Diocesan 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 thirteen lessons.
- Participation in an assembly which was also the School Nativity Play.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the Headteacher, the Deputy Head who is also the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), the Parish Priest, the Chair of Governors and the previous Chair of Governors and the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

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

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school. Parents and carers whom the inspectors met at the start of their visit praised many aspects of the school's work and one of them summed up the place of Religious Education at the heart of the school: 'R.E. is the star subject in this school – it's what makes the school so special.' But the words of the Headteacher also resonate: 'Our job is to find the gifts and talents of each child. All we do is a prayer.' The idea of each pupil and member of the school as a part of the one body of Christ permeates the school and is accompanied by a clear belief in the value of aspiration. During their visit, inspectors were privileged to attend an impressive Nativity play, incorporating song, dance and careful reference to the Gospel accounts – all of this put on by the youngest members of the school and viewed with respect and reflection by their comrades in Key Stage 2. The school has a precise understanding of its place in the community it serves, well-developed links with the local community and parishes and a deep respect for the charismatic work of the local parish priest, whose arrival at the school was greeted by gleeful responses in at least one Year 3 class. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to develop the school as a centre of excellence and in this she is ably supported by her deputy, who is also the R.E. Co-ordinator. They bring a wealth of experience and understanding to their perceived duty of ensuring that all children leave the school with a love of their faith. Every class observed carefully addressed one or another aspect of Advent preparation, including the special gifts such as faith, hope and understanding which can be offered to the baby Jesus. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson, children spoke with confidence about their work, were reflective about what they had written and showed the ability to discuss what might be added to make it better.

The school has been extensively developed. Staff and pupils alike are proud of their school and this is also reflected in the extremely articulate views and considered approaches of the School Council. The work in classrooms and around the school

carefully links subjects across the curriculum like R.E., art, information technology and literacy. The pupils know that adults will listen to them and value what they say and this is reflected in their approaches to each other. Improvement is coming about at a rapid rate as the school heads for consistently outstanding performance in all areas. The school is very well led by a focused headteacher who monitors rigorously, plans effectively and offers continual challenge while also empowering people through her deep belief that they can accomplish anything. She has carefully involved senior leaders, staff, pupils, parish priest, parishioners, parents and carers and governors in the drive for improvement. The governing body are very supportive of the work of the school through regular visits and the skills they bring to their work. At the same time, they are also focused in their belief in the school and their challenge to be the best possible school. In this, they are further supported by the involvement of the astute and well-informed parish priest.

Religious Education (R.E.) is at the heart of the school's work. The R.E. curriculum is based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme of study, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, and which is fully implemented. Excellent teacher use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) enhances delivery of the R.E. curriculum and helps to engage pupils with their learning which is well-planned by the subject co-ordinator but also allows individual teachers to play to their strengths and to work in effective co-operation with each other. Attainment is good and improving. Knowledge and understanding of religion and the ability to reflect on the significance of what they learn are clear in all year groups. Pupils work well in all lessons and enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with adults.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in R.E. is good but also increasingly outstanding. Lessons are planned in considerable detail and delivered with good use of visual and written resources. Teaching is highly effective in enthusing pupils because they know that their views count and because the teachers take great care to make lessons child-friendly. Teachers and support staff work closely together and deliver outstanding care, guidance and support, ensuring that transition arrangements into and out of the school are as easy as possible. The importance of R.E. in the curriculum is underlined by outstanding display all around the school, display which is overwhelmingly pupil-generated. Learning objectives are always clearly stated and teachers check that these are fully understood through excellent questioning and reinforcement procedures. Exercise books contain neatly-presented work and praise is often carefully used to indicate the way forward. However, the match of work to pupil ability could be further refined to ensure that pupils more consistently reach the highest levels and are challenged to improve further when their work is already good. Behaviour in class is often exemplary and it is very apparent that pupils have high expectations of each other which reflect those set by the headteacher and other staff.

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

All aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are outstanding. Pupils have a readily apparent sense of right and wrong. Older pupils regard it as an absolute duty to look after younger ones; everyone is very conscious of the need not to let their school down. Links with the local community are strong and are supplemented by links with many other parts of the world. Prayers are offered throughout the day and reinforced by carefully chosen themes for reflection.

Pupil contributions are outstanding and attendance is very high. The school extends a warm welcome from the moment the threshold is crossed because learning is fun, activities are meaningful, adults and children are interested in each other and in the world around them and everything feels possible. In such a climate, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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

- **Develop opportunities for pupils to reach the highest levels of attainment in R.E. by ensuring that assessment always adds an extra element of challenge, even when work is already good.**
- **Refine the match of work to pupil ability to help everyone reach their targets.**
- **Continue work with hard to reach parents and carers so everyone's involvement in the school continues to grow.**

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

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School displays an outstanding Catholic ethos. Every member of the school is central to its work and shares a strong belief in the potential of the school. It is a community where, in the words of one statement, 'the presence of God is never lost sight of or ignored.'