



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report



Name of School: Our Lady of Lourdes

LEA: Southend-on-Sea

Inspection Date: 25th January 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: 421
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: December 2011

School Address:
Manchester Drive,
Leigh-on-Sea,
Essex,
SS9 3HS

Tel. No. 01702 475689
Headteacher: Mrs M. Sullivan
Chair of Governors: Mr J. Johnson

Information about the school

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex in the diocese of Brentwood is a two form entry school which serves the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Leigh; St Peter's, Eastwood and St Helen's Westcliff. There are currently 421 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a small number for whom English is a second language. Almost 99% of pupils are Catholics as are 75% of teachers, ten of whom have the CCRS or equivalent qualification. The proportion of pupils with special needs is below the national average. The school is part of a well-established Deanery group.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

Our Lady of Lourdes is an outstanding Catholic school with a Catholic ethos which is evident in its daily life. Prayer and worship are central to its work. Pupils are given many opportunities for spiritual and moral development through the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The quality of pupils' learning and progress in religious education is very good as are the standards of attainment. There is careful monitoring of teaching, learning, and assessment. Governors know the school well and offer an excellent level of challenge and support. Pastoral care is very good and shared with the local parish priest who is also a governor, as well as all staff. Relationships within the school and with the parishes are very good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. The response to the parents' questionnaire indicated that an overwhelming majority are very happy with religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school has a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2011 identified the school as outstanding with three areas for development linked to assessment, target setting and the continuation of close involvement with parents and families. All three areas have been addressed although lack of space prevents parents being invited to liturgies held in school. However, families are always invited to Masses and other celebrations held in the parish church and attendance is good. The headteacher continually reviews practice and has put in place initiatives to further enhance provision and opportunities for pupils. The deputy headteacher who is also subject leader for religious education has produced a comprehensive and wide ranging action plan to sustain effectiveness and put in place further developments. All staff are well supported through in-service sessions and moderation when work is assessed and levelled. Regular monitoring is ensuring that teaching is constantly improving and well differentiated.

The quality of self-evaluation is very good. The school documentation is accurate and gives a comprehensive analysis of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. The curriculum which follows the 'Come and See' programme enables pupils to make connections between faith and their own lives. Staff are encouraged to improve their skills through training and embarking on the CCRS course. There are good links with local deanery schools including the Catholic secondary schools to which most pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2.

The current leadership has a very good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community and is well supported by her deputy. Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise and a good knowledge of the everyday life of the school. They visit frequently and liaise with senior leadership and subject leaders. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which are leading to very good outcomes for all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the areas identified in the current religious education action plan
- Revise the moderated work file so all examples of pupils' work illustrate the level of attainment being assessed.

Pupil achievement and progress in religious education are excellent. Pupils spoken to said they enjoy religious education and the wide range of activities involved. All pupils observed during the inspection worked well together and were keen to achieve. They have a good knowledge of scripture, the sacraments, Catholic teaching and moral issues appropriate to their age and abilities. All lessons observed were well planned with a range of interesting cross curricular activities. Pupils are given a very good foundation in Early Years classes which is built upon as they progress through the school. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they are working at a high level. On the day of the inspection Year 6 pupils in groups were interrogating aspects of the four gospels and noting key facts. They debated carefully using scripture to support their findings. Pupils were enthusiastic about this activity, listened to each other and compared their conclusions. Carefully differentiated support enabled all pupils to achieve well and make very good progress. Across the school workbooks are very well presented and show pupils' progress and coverage of the curriculum. Marking is positive with many examples of developmental and 'next steps' comments. Pupils are given an insight into other faiths which are taught well with a good range of resources.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They know the mission statement, 'At Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School we learn to live and love like Jesus, to help one another and treat everyone with kindness, tolerance, respect and understanding. God is always with us.' which is prominently displayed in every classroom. Pupils respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. They support a range of charities including Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, NSPCC and Great Ormond Street. They also have links to international education charities in Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. Pupils spoken to were able to link support for the needy with the life and teachings of Jesus. They are given responsibilities to support the life of the school in a range of roles including as school council members, Year 6 prefects and headship team, Year 5 Guardian Angels and Year 4 Buddies. There are excellent links with the Our Lady of Lourdes parish with regular Masses and liturgies in school and in the church. In addition, the parish priest who is also a governor provides pastoral support for staff and pupils, comes in frequently and acts as an extra teaching resource. There are plans to introduce 'Mini Vinnies' to link with the parish St Vincent de Paul Society. The priest from St Peter's parish also visits the school. Pupils show consideration and respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is very good and pupils value the sense of care, friendship and community created within the school. They are aware of the support available to them and feel safe, cared for and know where to go when they need help. A school counsellor is available for pupils and families several days each week. Parents value the care given to their children and the good level of communication with staff. Responses to a questionnaire were positive with many appreciative comments including, 'This is an excellent school with a very strong Catholic ethos which underpins all aspects of school life. Our three children have been nurtured all the way through their time here.'

Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of school life. Pupils participate in prayer several times a day in their classrooms and understand the importance of reflection and meditation. They participate confidently in assemblies. During the inspection staff and pupils led a moving reflection on the Beatitudes which included role play and a prayerful response to Jesus' words to his disciples. Sacred dance and wonderful singing followed which involved several classes. Pupils were attentive and reverent throughout. The cycle of celebrations in school reflects the Church's liturgical year and enables pupils to understand how faith links to everyday experiences. They respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey through the preparation for Masses and other liturgies including a dramatic presentation of the Stations of the Cross, a May procession and a Christmas Nativity play. Pupils have a good grasp of religious terminology appropriate to their ages. They learn the traditional prayers of the Church including the Angelus at lunchtime as well as writing their own, many of which were seen during the inspection. There is also a Rosary group led by the prayer council. There are plans to set up a team of Liturgy prefects from Years 5 and 6 to give pupils even more opportunities to plan, lead, organise and evaluate their liturgies.

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment meet or exceed diocesan expectations and tracking indicates that all groups make very good progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. School leadership gives religious education the same

importance as other core subjects and uses staff meeting time and in-service sessions to promote the continual development of the subject.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher and subject leader demonstrate excellent leadership through the way they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic life and religious education. They communicate a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and are supported in this by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The Catholicity of the school is evident in displays around the school as well as in the classroom prayer areas. The headteacher leads a gospel assembly at the beginning of each week which supports pupils' moral and spiritual development. Leaders ensure there are good links with Brentwood diocese through attendance at conference and deanery meetings.

Governors demonstrate a high level of commitment to the Catholic life of the school. The recently appointed Chair of Governors, an ex headteacher, is an active member of the diocese for Catholic education and has rapidly informed himself about the life of the school and current challenges and developments. The link governor for religious education visits each term to meet the subject leader and discuss current developments. He then reports back to the main governing body to ensure everyone is up to date. Many other governors are of long standing and have a wide knowledge and understanding of the school. They are well informed about its life through the headteacher's report and visits to school events as well as meetings with senior leaders. Along with the headteacher they monitor the school's provision for prayer and worship as well as religious education. They participate in the compilation of the school development plan which is reviewed regularly at governors' meetings. Governors have accessed training provided by the diocese which has enabled them to evaluate aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

The subject leader for religious education has produced a targeted action plan and is well placed to support colleagues. Along with the headteacher she monitors religious education through workbook scrutiny, observing teaching and evaluating outcomes. Feedback after lesson observations is resulting in improvements in teaching and learning. Assessment is enabling pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of the relevant concepts. A portfolio of assessed and levelled work assists teachers as they make judgements about pupil attainment although some revision is necessary to ensure the higher levels of attainment are illustrated.

School leaders ensure that Our Lady of Lourdes School is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities and participates in local community events. There are good links with other diocesan schools through the deanery group. Provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings. They also receive information about religious education through curriculum information newsletters and the recently updated website.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or better. Pupils are given an excellent start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and a wide range of engaging activities. All groups of pupils make very good progress and behaviour for learning is excellent. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding. In all year groups well differentiated tasks enable pupils to work with enthusiasm and interest. Good support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive with 'next steps' comments giving pupils suggestions of ways to improve. There is every indication that current very good standards are likely to be maintained.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is very good. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The programme 'Come and See' has been implemented throughout the school and is now embedded. It is enhanced by 'Journey in Love' materials and very good parish links including visits to the parish church. In addition, teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to enhance the curriculum through examples from their own lives and the wider world. There are good quality resources

to support the curriculum and there are plans to purchase additional class sets of Bibles. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the importance of faith to its work. 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.

Provision for prayer and worship at Our Lady of Lourdes is outstanding. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They 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. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and a display board which includes children's work. Feast day Masses are celebrated throughout the year and the traditions of the Church are explored with pupils. A new school chapel is giving additional opportunities for reflection and worship. Year 6 pupils go on an annual retreat to Walsingham House to support their faith journey. Parents and families are invited to Masses and liturgies in the parish church although limited space prevents them from attending most school celebrations. During Lent many pupils and families attend an early morning Mass in the parish church on Fridays which is followed by breakfast in school.

The school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. There is evidence that very good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current very good practice in all areas.

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.