



## DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

### Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

**Name of School:** St Alban's Catholic Primary School  
**Local Authority:** Havering

**Inspection Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**Reporting Inspector:** Mrs Angela O'Hara (Lead Inspector)

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and 2011.

<b>Type of School:</b>	Primary	<b>School Address:</b>	Heron Flight Avenue
<b>School Category:</b>	Good		Hornchurch
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4-11		Essex
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed		RM12 5LN
<b>Number on roll:</b>	208		
<b>Appropriate Authority:</b>	The Governing Body	<b>Tel. No.</b>	01708 555644
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Lisa Schaberg
		<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mrs Julie Finan

## Information about the school

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is one form entry in Elm Park, London Borough of Havering and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of St Alban's in Elm Park with a few pupils coming from adjoining parishes. There are currently 208 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. The school is over subscribed. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 76% with 19% other Christian and 5% other religions. 82% of the teachers are Catholic. The majority of pupils are from White British background with around 19% from Black African heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average.

## Key grades for inspection

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

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

**Grade 1**

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school. It is a warm and welcoming community and a celebration of learning and growth with Christ at its centre. The key characteristics of a Catholic school are deeply understood by all members of the school community and leaders are committed to its promotion in every area of school life. The Catholic life is evident in all aspects of the school. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy, exemplifies strong purposeful Catholic leadership and is an inspirational role model in the Catholic community. Parents are supportive of the school. They are encouraged to be active in the life of the school through worship and liturgy, as well as in supporting their children's learning. Communication between home, school and parish is excellent.

Governors play an active role in the life of the school and are committed to its ongoing development. They are knowledgeable and understand the unique role they have as the Bishop's representatives. They support and challenge the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the school's Catholic character and ethos is protected and promoted and that the school's values shape decision making. The Parish Priest is proud of the school and recognises the strength of the relationship between home, school and parish, which results in a community which strives for the best for its children. He is active in supporting the school through worship and also by providing a chaplaincy role which offers support to all members of the school community. He also provides support for teachers in delivering the Religious Education programme. His support is highly valued by the staff, parents and pupils.

The school's Mission Statement is clear and succinct and is understood by the whole community. Pupils recite this readily at the start of every day and they can explain its meaning. It sets out the school's aims; that it strives for excellence and wants the best for all its pupils and for them to develop their relationship with God. Beautiful displays around the school and in classrooms reflect and celebrate the high expectations of the school. The school environment is cared for and loved, which reflects the care and respect that is given to all pupils and all members of the school community.

Pupils demonstrate that they understand the demands of living out their faith and embrace the opportunities to show care and kindness to others. They are excellent ambassadors for the school in the way they behave and confidently articulate the school's mission and values. They are proud of their school. They recognise that faith should be lived out and that they are witnesses to the gospel values and virtues on which their school is centred.

Religious Education is a priority subject. Teachers are knowledgeable and expertly supported by the head teacher and deputy, who is also the subject leader. Support also comes through a carefully planned programme of professional development. The school makes full use of the support provided by the Diocese. Strength in the teaching of Religious Education is also secured through a strong professional working relationship fostered with other Catholic schools in the Deanery. Standards in Religious Education are high, and pupils make good progress because teaching is ambitious and effective.

## What the school should do to improve further:

- Develop teaching across the school so that more teaching is judged as outstanding and so that lessons provide further challenge for all pupils.
- Building on the good practice that already exists, enable pupils to take increased responsibility for planning and leading liturgy and incorporate more opportunities for silent reflection.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

## Grade 1

Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They can articulate what it means to be a member of St Alban's Catholic School and what the school does to help them live out the Mission Statement. They contribute in a planned way to the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements to it. This is perfectly demonstrated through the work of the Junior Disciples who meet regularly to help develop the prayer life, for example in preparing and maintaining the quiet outdoor prayer space, as well as and planning various charity projects.

Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others, as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils are confident and welcoming, and they are keen to share with visitors all that they achieve and do at their school. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. Happy, confident, and friendly pupils is a striking feature of the school.

The curriculum is effectively planned and taught, with Catholic social teaching and understanding permeating all aspects of learning. One pupil remarked that, 'all our learning links back to God for example in art we might look at religious paintings'. Another pupil added "and in geography and science we look at the world and think about deforestation in God's world". Personal Social and Health Education is very well planned and monitored in the school. This area of learning encompasses a wide range of aspects related to pupils' personal and moral development. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own personal responsibility towards themselves and others.

The school makes good use of a range of resources and key national events, such as internet safety week, anti-bullying week and Parliament week. Pupils are learning to become responsible citizens and witnesses to the teachings of the Gospel. They are well prepared for the next phase of their education and beyond. Good relationships with surrounding Catholic secondary schools ensure smooth transitions for pupils. Appropriate to their age and capability, pupils have an excellent understanding of loving relationships through the delivery of a carefully planned programme for Relationships, Sex and Health Education programme (RSHE) in line with Diocesan guidelines. Parents are kept well informed of the curriculum content and of the ways that lessons are taught. Pupils understand that they have a responsibility for looking after our common home. They are aware of the significance of the Pope's encyclical *Laudato Si* and led by the Eco Warrior Team, look for ways to demonstrate their commitment to the world and its peoples.

Pupils deeply value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the diocese. As a result, they are enthusiastically and regularly involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities; for example, serving at Mass in the parish, being part of a school/parish choir and supporting the *Live Simply* initiative. They are also knowledgeable about the school's history and how this is reflected in the House System. Pupils are confident in expressing pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs. This is a notable strength of the school.

Pupils enthusiastically embrace and respond to the high expectations set by the school for learning and behaviour. They remark that the school encourages them to be independent and take on responsibility. They take a leading role in those activities which promote the school's Catholic life within the school and beyond. They support a wide range of charities, as well as local food banks and donating old maths books to charity. The School Council is active in this work, using the *Parable of the Talents* as its starting point. Enterprise Day which takes place annually, raises funds for a range of charities chosen by pupils.

Charities supported by school are far reaching and include Save the Children, Mission Together, CAFOD, Young Minds and CancerCare.

Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable in both policy and practice. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported effectively and the school's inclusive approach is demonstrated in the way that lessons and activities are planned and delivered. Every pupil achieves a level of success and classroom learning support assistants show exceptional skill in supporting pupils with additional needs. All pupils and staff in the school are familiar with Makaton sign language.

The school provides a curriculum and approach that meets pupils' pastoral and development needs making good use of *Ten Ten* resources.

The pastoral needs of pupils and their families were prioritised throughout periods of lockdown, as the school sought to ensure the community was supported and all knew that the school was there for them. Several parents commented on this. The school also provides support to those pupils suffering loss and bereavement through the Rainbows Bereavement programme.

The school ensures that parents are informed of all key policies through the well-presented website and through direct email communication. Parents are fully supportive of the school and appreciative of what it offers. One parent wrote "I feel that my child has been taught to be humble, kind and to treat others nicely". Another parent wrote "My daughter's spirituality is greatly enhanced by the Catholic ethos of the school. She has a deep love of God and knows that God loves her deeply too".

The Leadership of the school is committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all its members including staff and continues to keep policy initiatives under review to consider impact on workload and wellbeing. Staff wellbeing initiatives have been delivered in recent years. Staff recruitment and retention information indicates that the school is a happy place which provides a productive working and learning environment. The school has productive relationships with Initial Teacher Education providers.

Evidence in books shows that pupils make very good progress in each key stage, with a number achieving outstanding progress, including SEND pupils. Religious Education (RE) books are well presented and reflect pupils' positive attitudes toward the subject and a respect for this area of learning. Pupils are aware that to develop a relationship with God they need to know Him. One pupil remarked, "RE helps you understand more about what Jesus' words mean". Another said, "the words in the bible help you with everyday living- they are always there to help you". Pupils are confident when talking about their learning and show that they are religiously literate, using subject specific vocabulary to express their ideas and knowledge.

Pupils are able to make appropriate and accurate references to scripture and build upon their prior learning. They use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. In one lesson, pupils discussed diversity and variety in the context of St Paul's teachings. They confidently used scripture to unpick the meaning and share ideas about what this meant for them. All pupils approach lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy tackling challenging activities and respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning. In lessons which were outstanding, this was a key feature. Teachers press pupils to extend their thinking and elaborate on their answers. In all lessons, pupils are focused and concentrate exceptionally well.

Marking and feedback from teachers enables pupils to build on what they know and develop their learning. Pupils' responses to their teacher's feedback show that they are keen to improve. Pupils can explain their learning and what they need to do to continue to improve. Many can confidently articulate how they have made progress. This is especially the case in upper key stage 2. One pupil said that in every lesson you "learn something new" and another that "RE helps us appreciate others".

Working with the diocese and other local Catholic schools, the subject leader is developing assessment further, guiding teachers to use assessment more effectively and efficiently. The subject leader provides extensive support as well as role modelling expectations and practice.

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. This is because teachers plan lessons which are creative and challenging. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Role play and drama used in younger classes encourage development of language and pupils respond with enthusiasm. In all year groups, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of key religious vocabulary.

Subject knowledge is a strength of the school and teachers ensure that pupils use subject specific vocabulary in responses and build on what they have already learned. Because subject knowledge is strong, teachers can ask challenging questions and probe pupils' responses. This was a feature of the lessons that were outstanding. Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Pupils work well in pairs and as a larger group and they use learning partners effectively to develop understanding. Pupils are motivated and focused in lessons. Learning behaviours are excellent. Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is high and the quality of written work and oral responses in class is outstanding.

Leadership in Religious Education is outstanding. Working with the headteacher, the subject leader is committed to the ongoing development of the subject and keen to look for ways to support teachers' expertise and knowledge. She is ambitious for Religious Education and her passion for the subject is evident. Actions taken to address the areas for improvement from the last Section 48 inspection have been successful and Religious Education is well resourced. The school makes good use of external speakers to enable pupils to develop an understanding of other faith traditions eg Islam. A visit from a local Rabbi is planned. Visiting speakers from CAFOD enable pupils to further their knowledge of Catholic social action projects.

The school meets the bishops' requirements in ensuring that 10% of the school's taught curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education. Governors are active in reviewing and monitoring the quality of Religious Education through regular reporting by the subject leader. The newly appointed governor is becoming familiar with the *Come and See* Religious Education programme and is keen to develop his role in the school.

The example set by the headteacher, her deputy and all staff, sends a powerful message to all members of the school community and enables pupils to feel confident in expressing and celebrating their faith. The authenticity of the school's faith commitment and love of God is palpable. Its expression in the Mission Statement, which is known by all pupils, captures this and drives the school forward. Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing and in the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer

The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. Pupils understand the liturgical year and can explain the significance of the symbols and colours.

During Advent and Lent pupils are encouraged to attend the voluntary after school club led by the headteacher. Led by the Junior Disciples, pupils display confidence in their use of a variety of approaches to prayer, such as using scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music. Pupils know the prayers of the Church and wholeheartedly engage in the school prayers throughout the day. They are also able to create spontaneous and personal prayer. Many are able to talk about the different form of prayer supported by the TAPS display in every classroom which reminds pupils of thanksgiving, adoration, petition and sorry. They are proud of their quiet prayer area and can explain how this is used. They sing their hymns with great commitment and devotion.

The prayer life of the school is central to all activities and pupils can explain how prayer helps them to reflect upon the needs of others and on their own faith. They show a good awareness of the various forms of prayer

Prayer boxes in all classrooms enable pupils to offer their own prayer intentions and the focus area devoted to Mary also provides a place to reflect and pray. Every class has a special prayer focus table which includes a bible, cross and candle and a drape of the appropriate liturgical colour. The weekly voluntary meditation club is well attended by pupils and staff and enables pupils to explore a specific form of prayer. Pupils appreciate that this offers times of silence and reflection.

Worship is planned carefully and modelled by all staff. There are a range of worship opportunities: whole school, class, infant and junior liturgy. Eucharistic Liturgy (Mass) is held at key times of the year such as the patronal feast. Worship throughout the week is well organised and varied and teachers model an authentic response to the prayers and readings.

Religious artefacts, such as the holding cross, are used appropriately in worship and pupils recognise and respect the significance of these. Special class candles are lit at the start of the weekly whole school assembly which focuses on Sunday's gospel. At the end of the assembly the Junior Disciples take each candle back to the classrooms to signify that the message of the worship is taken into all classes. Pupils are encouraged to read during all liturgies.

Class assemblies are based on the *Come and See* programme and the school makes excellent use of CAFOD and *Ten Ten* resources and visiting speakers. During the inspection, the headteacher led a powerful assembly as the starting point of the school's Lenten journey, which focused on a virtual pilgrimage. Pupils excitedly offered suggestions and ideas and were able to respond with confidence and commitment to the questions posed. They prayed and sang with conviction and even the very youngest children, supported by their year 6 'buddies' were able to join in wholeheartedly.

Pupils share in a rich variety of liturgical celebrations and Sacraments throughout the year such as: Harvest Festival, liturgical assembly based on Sunday Gospel, assemblies with charity and lived faith focus such as CAFOD and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by the parish Priest.

Reconciliation services and the Sacrament of Reconciliation supports and nurtures pupils' spirituality and faith development.

The school website includes links to daily prayers and Masses from the diocese. Using technology during lockdown, the Parish Priest and headteacher ensured that families were able to share in the celebration of Mass.