



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School

LEA: Havering URN 102354

Inspection Date: 11th November 2009

Reporting Inspectors: Ms. Colette Dawson and Mr. Anthony Castle

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

Type of School: Comprehensive
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 11 - 18
Gender of pupils: Female
Number on roll: 822 (193 in Sixth Form)
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous Inspection: September 2006

School Address:
St Mary's Lane
Upminster, Essex, RM14 2QR
Tel. No. 01708 222660
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Chair of Governors: Mr B. Hoggett
Headteacher: Mrs. B. Williams

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

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Upminster
Essex
RM14 2QR**

Head Teacher: Mrs. B. Williams

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Description of the School.

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School is an 11-18 Catholic Voluntary Aided school for girls. It serves Havering and surrounding areas. The school became a specialist Business and Enterprise school and this is having a significant impact on the life of the school. Most students are of white British origin with about a fifth coming from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School is a very popular, over-subscribed school. The students are socially confident and receptive to learning. They respond extremely well to the ethos of the School, learning to support each other and respectful of the needs of others. Parents praise the school for its achievements and for the richness of the education it provides for their daughters. The school was founded by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary in May 1927 and still has close links with the Sisters who live in the Convent next door.

Record of Evidence Base

Two inspectors were in the school for the equivalent of two inspection days.

- The study of pre-inspection documentation, including Self-Evaluation form / Denominational Provision (SEF/DP).
- The observation of lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Participation in two Year Assemblies
- Meetings with the Headteacher, the Deputy Head, the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), the R.E. link Governor, the Chaplaincy Co-ordinator and representatives of the School Council
- Observations of displays in the R.E. rooms and around the School.

What the School does well

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School continues to be an outstanding Catholic School, which displays numerous strengths. It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic character under the dedicated and inspirational leadership of its Headteacher, who is very well supported by her Deputy, Senior Leadership Team, Governors, Staff, Students and their Parents and local Clergy.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in R.E. in the main school and in the Sixth Form is outstanding. Lessons are well-planned and paced, learners are on task, engaged, highly motivated and enjoy their R.E. A variety of teaching strategies were observed during the inspection day. Resources are excellent and there are detailed schemes of work across all Key stages. Literacy, numeracy, thinking skills and information communication technology (ITC) are embedded in these schemes. Behaviour is outstanding and relationships and class management continue to be a strength of the school.

There is a clear Department Assessment of and for Learning policy which reflects the school's policy. Students' work is assessed thoroughly and regularly and constructive written feedback is given to them, enabling them to make significant progress. The Department has clear guidelines for marking students' work. Self-assessment and

peer assessment are in place and assessment generally is another strength of the school. Students taking GCSE in Religious Studies are making significant progress, well above the National average. In 2009, the percentage of A* - C grades increased to 98%.

The leadership and management of the R.E. Department by the Subject Leader are outstanding. The R.E. team hold regular meetings. The Department promotes high expectations of both staff and students. Tracking, rigorous monitoring and target setting of students have led directly to significant examination success. The school uses the 'ICONS' programme of study for Key Stage 3 and has customised it to the needs of the students. General R.E. is a significant part of the Sixth Form curriculum and accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN) in year 13.

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School promotes an outstanding and tangible Catholic ethos. This is subscribed to by all the stakeholders – governors, the head teacher, her deputy and her senior leadership team, staff, students and their parents. The school provides outstanding opportunities for the girls to develop a strong sense of community through activities which engender feelings of loyalty and belonging. They are given every opportunity to become responsible citizens. This is evident in their concern for each other and for those who are in need. The school has a proactive School Council.

Opportunities for collective worship and liturgical celebrations figure high on the school's list of priorities. Prayer and Liturgy are at the heart of the school. During the Inspection day both of the Inspectors participated in two Year Group Assemblies. The girls responded enthusiastically on these occasions which were enhanced by music. They are actively engaged in the planning and delivery of all liturgical celebrations. Overall the quality of Collective Worship and Liturgical celebrations is outstanding. The liturgical and spiritual life of the school is its cornerstone. There is an enthusiastic and energetic chaplain who makes excellent use of her two days a week and is making a marked impression on the spiritual life of the whole school community.

Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School has strong links with its Governing Body who are very supportive of all that the school does and very proud of the school's achievements. The school values its links with parents which are strong. They praise the school for its achievements and for the richness of the education it provides for their daughters. There is a very active Parent Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) According to a recent Kirkland Rowell Survey parents indicated that the following areas of the school were 'exceptional':

- Developing moral values
- School discipline
- School communication
- Community spirit.

There are strong links with the local clergy who are frequent visitors to the school. All the stakeholders appreciate the time and friendship given to the school by the clergy. Links with the feeder primary schools and other Havering schools are in place. These links have been enhanced since the school achieved Business and Enterprise status.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is an outstanding strength of the school. This was recognised by its Ofsted report in April this year – ‘All elements of students’ personal development throughout the school are excellent’ The Section 48 inspectors endorse this judgement wholeheartedly. Significantly high numbers of pupils elect to assume positions of responsibility which include Form Captains, Form representatives with responsibility for Music, Liturgy, Drama and Games, School Council members, members of the Pupil Chaplaincy Team, Librarians and Eucharistic Ministers. Every year the school raises over £10,000 for charitable causes at home and abroad. These include CAFOD, the Shoebox Appeal, Kids Alive, Catholic schools in Africa, a farm in India, HCPT and many other local, national and global charities. Sacred Heart of Mary Girls’ School is an outstanding exemplar of Community Cohesion.

Effectiveness of the Sixth Form

The Sixth Form is very popular, attracting girls from local state schools. Every effort is being made to raise the profile of AS and A2 Religious Studies. Two ‘A’ level lessons were observed in the Sixth Form and both were outstanding. The vast majority of Sixth Formers progress to higher education.

There are no major improvements needing to be made other than those highlighted in the Self Evaluation Form.

Overall, the Sacred Heart of Mary Girls’ School continues to be an outstanding school which displays numerous strengths. It prepares its students so that they leave school 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, her Deputy and her Senior Leadership Team and to the valued support and expertise of her staff and governors.