



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Unique Reference Number: 102329

Inspection Date: November 15, 2013

**Reporting Inspectors: Dr. Michael Sutherland-Harper and
Mrs. Maureen Perry**

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: 425
Appropriate Authority: The governing body
Date of previous inspection:**

**School Address: Hornchurch Road
Hornchurch, Essex
RM12 4TL.**

**Tel. No. 01708 448430
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Chair of Governors: Alexandra Kearns
Headteacher: Andrea Elliker**

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

**St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
Hornchurch Road
Hornchurch, Essex
RM12 4TL.**

Head Teacher: Andrea Elliker

Date of Inspection: November 15, 2013

Description of the School:

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the London borough of Havering and in the diocese of Brentwood. The school is a larger than average sized primary school. The school serves the Catholic parish of St. Mary, Mother of God in Hornchurch.

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 12 lessons.
- Participation in an assembly.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher, the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), the Parish Priest, the Vice-Chair of Governors and the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

What the School does well:

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a good school which is improving rapidly under the outstanding leadership of its headteacher. The school can take justifiable pride in being a 'happy school where children learn and grow in the Catholic faith in a caring environment', in the words of its mission statement. The headteacher is relentlessly committed to improving attainment and teaching in Religious Education (R.E.) and across the school. She is well supported in this by her recently reformed leadership team and by a governing body which has an accurate, realistic picture of the school.

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning in R.E. is good and in some lessons, it is outstanding. In these lessons, expectations are very high that all pupils can do even better with each successive lesson. An interesting range of activities, which relate learning to real-life situations, offers pupils many opportunities to reflect. Consequently, in these classes, the school's generally confident, articulate pupils are delighted to be able to share their perspectives with each other and with adults.

The quality of learning and progress in R.E. is good. Pupils show good understanding of what they study and some say that the topics they explore are very absorbing. These topics encourage pupils to think about the world in which they live. Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong, and how important good behavior and attitudes are in any civilized society. Whenever they are given the chance, pupils are ready to express and opinion. Their understanding of their faith is reinforced by the links the school has made with an Islamic school and with Africa. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils listen respectfully to each other and to adults.

The extent to which pupils contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in the work of the school and its neighbouring parish. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school, as the children are to his church. A number serve Mass daily at the church. Pupils are eager to support charities, including the Christmas shoe box appeal, and thereby help others. They

have written their own mission statement. Inspectors were deeply impressed by a choir rehearsal held during their visit which showed the great potential in the school. Pupils can see how much the school has to offer them when they have to apply their skills out of school, for example, on the visits to the Isle of Wight or to Aylesford.

Pupils' response to, and participation in, collective worship is outstanding as shown by prayers reverently spoken in class, an enthusiastic response to a whole school assembly, the pride with which pupils have contributed to high quality R.E. displays and pupils' high profile in the local parish. The expectation that only the best is good enough is becoming much more consistent.

Leaders, governors and managers are deeply committed to their role in delivering Catholic education. Led by the outstanding headteacher, whose determination and accurate assessment of teaching are leading the school forward at an increasingly rapid rate, they are determined that the school will become outstanding in the near future. Governors have accurately identified the strengths of the school and the areas for development. The school improvement plan correctly identifies what needs to be done. Plans are afoot to add extra material on the on-going development of the Catholic ethos and values. Staff have increasing opportunities for professional growth. Pupils are more involved in school life than ever before, including via a school council brimming with ideas. Leaders, governors and managers are now focused on fully developing links with parents.

The effectiveness of leaders, governors and managers in promoting, monitoring and evaluating provision for R.E. is good. The school is effectively making the transition to the new 'Come and See' syllabus. The R.E. co-ordinator is working closely with staff to develop the subject, including how to get more pupils to the very highest levels at Key Stages 1 and 2. Parents are being made more aware of how R.E. is developing across the school. Tracking systems are improving but could still provide more detail about improvements term-on-term. Links with other schools are increasing but there is further work to be done in the identification and sharing of best practice by teachers and support staff to raise all adult input to the highest levels.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching observed during the inspection was good and sometimes outstanding. Where teaching was best, the initiative soon passed to the children, excellent use was made of questioning and of electronic resources and delivery of the topics was appropriate to the age level of the pupils but also incorporated much challenge. In other lessons, expectations are sometimes too closely tied to the lesson outcomes rather than the long-term learning objective. Marking is regular and presentation of pupils' work is good. However, teachers' comments are not always followed up by pupils and it is sometimes hard to see, apart from length of answer, how more able pupils have added value to the general lesson objective.

Promotion of the R.E. curriculum is outstanding, including via display in classrooms. Pupils have frequent opportunities to interact with other settings and to express their opinions. The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation

of curriculum time for taught R.E. Parents have opportunities to respond to questionnaires and to help shape the direction of the school.

The provision of Catholic education is good and close to outstanding. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors share a clear-sighted approach to taking the school forward. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is a strength of the school.

What needs to be improved?

- **Use data more effectively and consistently to quickly identify any possible gaps in learning**
- **Increase expectations and challenge for the most able pupils, including through the development of marking and the sharing of best classroom practice.**

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