



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Inspection Report

Name of School: Holy Family Primary School

LEA: Essex

Inspection Date: 2nd May 2018

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: 197
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: May 2012

School Address:
Maltings Lane,
Witham,
Essex,
CM8 1DX

Tel. No. 01376 513418
Headteacher: Mrs A. Kelliher
Chair of Governors: Mrs A. Wright

Information about the school

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is one form entry in Witham, Essex and part of the diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parish of The Holy Family and All Saints Church in Witham and St Mary's, Silver End. There are currently 197 pupils aged 4-11 on roll. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 67% with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations, other faiths or none. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. About 14% of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average. There are close links with other Catholic schools in the area through a 'shadow' Multi Academy Trust group which includes the secondary schools to which most pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

Holy Family is an outstanding Catholic School. Strong and effective leadership gives a clear sense of purpose and direction to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils benefit from excellent opportunities for spiritual and moral development which are part of the provision for religious education, prayer and collective worship. The Catholicity of the school is evident in all aspects of its work. There is a clear focus on reviewing provision as well as putting in place robust systems for teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. Pastoral care is very good and shared by all members of the school community. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate opportunities given to be involved in all aspects of its life. Parents praise the good standard of education and way the school communicates with them. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' standards of attainment meet or exceed diocesan expectations.

The school has a very good capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2012 identified two areas for development linked to teaching, learning and guidance through developmental marking. These areas have been very well addressed and are evident in teachers' planning. Improved assessment and careful tracking have led to higher standards of attainment in religious education. Pupils know their version of the school's mission statement, 'Living, Loving, Learning Together' which is reviewed annually on School Development Day. The headteacher has recently taken on the role of subject lead for religious education and has an excellent understanding of current developments and is well placed to support colleagues. The school gives a high profile to religious education and has effective strategies to share good practice with new staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to implement the areas for development identified in the religious education action plan.
- Prepare for assessment without levels to be implemented later this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Attainment and progress in religious education are very good. Pupils work with interest and commitment, and say they enjoy their religious education lessons and appreciate the wide range of tasks involved. Behaviour for learning is very good and pupils work well together whether in groups or pairs. Pupils are given a very good start in Early Years which is built upon as they progress through the school. In an excellent Year 2 lesson linked to Pentecost, pupils explored the coming of the Holy Spirit and the spread of Christ's message through a range of cross-curricular activities including dance, role play, news gathering, art and music. Older pupils can work independently and use research skills to extend their understanding of scripture. They are able to identify sources of religious belief and link them to their own lives today. The school has made an investment in resources including teaching assistants which is ensuring all groups of pupils are well supported and make good progress. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their ages. Workbooks show coverage of the curriculum and indicate very good progress made by all groups. Presentation is generally very good and pupils take a pride in their work.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They show concern for others in school and the wider community. They are keen to take on responsibilities including membership of

the school and worship councils, as sports ambassadors and reading buddies. Year 6 pupils act as lunchtime play leaders who organise games and activities for younger children. Many local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including Operation Christmas Child, Cancer Research, Comic Relief, Children in Need and Witham Food Bank. Pupils understand that the teachings of Jesus underpin their response to the needs of others. The school also enables pupils to be involved in the local community through taking part in events including music and sports competitions. Parish links are excellent with many events to which parishioners are invited. In its turn the school supports the parish bazaar and pupils act as 'Welcomers' before Sunday Mass. Easter and Christmas productions and carol singing are also shared with the parish. The school participates in the Diocesan Citizenship Awards which acknowledges the way pupils can live out Gospel values. Pupils are thoughtful, courteous, care for their school and each other. They are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives and understand that a sense of service is part of being a member of a Catholic community. They very much value the sense of friendship and belonging created within the school.

Pupils respond positively to opportunities to lead and participate in the school's collective worship. They help in the preparation of Masses and assemblies by writing prayers and choosing hymns. They read at Masses and act as altar servers and lead the offertory procession. Masses are held most weeks in school and parents and parishioners are always invited to attend. During the inspection, morning worship in classes across the school was observed where pupils were encouraged to reflect on scripture and read prayers they had written. Music, singing and meditation were included and all pupils were involved and reverent. Pupils are able to pray in different ways and at different times. They use scripture, the traditional prayers of the church, reflection and their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection. They experience traditional Catholic devotions including The Rosary and Stations of the Cross. The Angelus is said daily in all Key Stage 2 classes. The Worship Council lead some liturgies including the Stations of the Cross before Easter. Reconciliation services in Advent and Lent are held by the local parish priest who shows a very high level of commitment to the school through visits to say Mass. Year 6 pupils participate in a class retreat towards the end of their time in the school.

Pastoral care is very good and given a high priority by staff and governors who work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. Additional support is available when needed. Pupils spoken to said they feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need support. They value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents spoken to said they value the care given to their children, good communication with staff and the quality of education.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

School leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The Headteacher, supported by senior staff, demonstrates excellent leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for its Catholic life. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development which she shares with the whole school community. Governors have a high level of expertise and an extensive knowledge of the life of the school through frequent visits, discussions with leaders and monitoring provision. They are very well placed to play a role in the strategic development of the school and have achieved the Essex Quality Governance Mark. All leaders are committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The development of Catholic life is seen as central to all that happens and there is a strong commitment both to improve in all aspects of education and to provide high quality care for pupils. Staff and governors have an annual 'School Development Day' to review areas identified in the religious education action plan and help to prepare the one for the following year. Leaders ensure that staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills through meetings and attendance at diocesan led training.

The headteacher as the new subject leader monitors religious education by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning which is followed by feedback to individual teachers. She and her predecessor have produced a school wide data base on religious education enabling tracking and efficient resource provision. She is supported in this by the parish priest who is one of two link governors for religious education. A half termly report on the subject is presented to the governors for discussion. The subject leader also works closely with other deanery schools to share good practice and moderate standards. She produces an annual religious education action plan which identifies areas for development and consolidation. There are regular sessions for staff development to ensure teachers

are secure and confident in their delivery of the 'Come and See' religious education programme. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and five of them have the CCRS or equivalent qualification.

The experienced Chair of Governors works closely with senior leadership. She has a very good understanding of strengths and areas for development. She ensures all governors have the opportunity to attend diocesan and local authority training to enable them to fulfil their role. Governors are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report, meetings with subject leaders and frequent visits. The parish priest who is link governor for religious education also plays a key role in the life of the school. Governors are very well placed to challenge and support. They are present and available for parents on Open Evenings and on 'Governors' Day' they also hear the pupils' perspectives.

Leaders ensure that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths. Leaders ensure pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of belief in modern life linked to British values. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others through charitable fund raising and involvement in the local community. Opportunities for spiritual development ensure that they are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences and link them to the life and teachings of Jesus. Parents help the school by organising events which are fund-raising as well supporting a sense of community. Parents and carers are invited to many school events and are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress through regular meetings and reports. Curriculum information letters include religious education which enables parents to support their children's faith journey.

Provision

Grade 1

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or outstanding. They are planned with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. These include drama, role play, 'hot seating' and debate. High quality resources including class sets of bibles are used effectively to ensure pupils are familiar with scripture. In all classes observed pupils worked with interest and made good progress. Careful differentiation is made to ensure all pupils achieve well. Teachers respond very well to pupils' comments and take opportunities to develop understanding. Higher order questioning was a feature of lessons observed. The good use of teaching assistants is a strength of the school. Marking is positive, interactive and includes suggestions of ways to improve. Assessment, planning and tracking support the learning and progress of all groups of pupils. There is every indication that current very good standards are likely to be maintained or improved.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is excellent. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. This is demonstrated by the budget devoted to it and the current level of resources. Each class has a designated saint for the term and pupils are eager to discuss the life and teaching of their saint. Vibrant religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The 'Come and See' programme is enhanced by 'Journey in Love,' cross curricular links and the use of other resources. Links with a school in South Africa assists in developing understanding of other cultures. Other faiths are taught well and include and a visiting speaker from the Jewish community. 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. Music also contributes very well to the religious education curriculum and Catholic life of the school and singing is very good. The support given to families through extra-curricular activities gives a strong sense of community to the school. Parents also appreciate opportunities for discussion at the parents' forum.

Collective worship at Holy Family is outstanding and central to the life of the school. Assemblies and liturgies contribute greatly to the spiritual development of pupils. They often 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. They welcome opportunities to plan and lead liturgies. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts and display boards which include key vocabulary and children's work. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school and church throughout the year. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations. The parish priest visits frequently and supports the school through regular Masses and liturgies as well as

offering pastoral care on an informal basis. There are also very strong parish links through sacramental programmes and pupils' involvement in the parish Sunday Mass.

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.