



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**

### **Denominational (S48) Inspection Report**

**Name of School:** Our Lady of Lourdes  
**Local Authority:** Good Shepherd Catholic Trust

**Inspection Date:** 18 March 2022

**Reporting Inspector:** Angela Podmore (Lead Inspector)

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

<b>Type of School:</b>	Academy Trust	<b>School Address:</b>	Chestnut Drive
<b>School Category:</b>	Primary		Wanstead
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	3 -11		London
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	Mixed		E11 2TA
<b>Number on roll:</b>	439		
<b>Appropriate Authority:</b>	The Governing Body	<b>Tel. No.</b>	020 8989 3660
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	7 July 2015	<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Ruth Boon
		<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr Anthony McCarthy

## **Information about the school**

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary school is a two form entry primary school within the Good Shepherd Academy Trust in the Diocese of Brentwood. It mainly serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes but also serves the parish of St Anne Line. There are currently 439 pupils on roll including 34 children in the Nursery. Currently 75% of pupils are Catholic with 15% from other Christian backgrounds and the remainder from other faith backgrounds. The school serves an increasingly diverse community and a higher than average percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with an Educational Health Care plan is broadly in line with national averages but the number of pupils deemed to have special educational needs is higher than the national average. A number of teachers at the school have gained the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or another Catholic qualification. The school is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School.

## **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 a kind, nurturing, family orientated community which provides its pupils with an outstanding Catholic education. The creative and inspiring Headteacher leads a school determined to develop children of the future, fully ready to take their place in society. Leaders share a clear vision for continuous development and a strong determination not to be complacent but to ensure that the distinctive Catholic environment allows everyone to develop their unique gifts and talents to the full. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school, they had no difficulty thinking of words to describe their school – ‘unique, caring, spiritual, charitable, beautiful, fun, magical, educational and Catholic’. Pupils’ welfare is given the highest priority through excellent pastoral care. School leaders are fully committed to the church’s mission in education sharing the drive and ambition to make the school a Christ centric place of learning. The dynamic headteacher empowers her staff to take leading roles in the school and, along with the equally committed Deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leader, is an excellent role model, continuously moving the school forward in a strive for excellence. The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. Governors work closely with senior leadership and have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development and are equally ambitious for the school. They are well informed about the life of the school and visit the school frequently offering both support and challenge.

## **What the school should do to improve further:**

- Continue to develop Catholic Social Teaching as a core element that underpins the school curriculum.
- Continue to ensure strong induction and mentoring is in place for all new staff in order to maintain the already high standards of teaching and learning.

The Catholic Life of Our Lady of Lourdes School is clearly evident as you enter the school grounds. The stained glass windows on the outside of the Reception area and those on some classroom windows announce to the wider community that this is a Christian community proud of its Catholic identity. The school Mission Statement, 'We are a Catholic School. We strive to be a sign of Christ's presence in the world. We follow Jesus,' is prominently displayed throughout the school and is known and respected by the whole community. Further testimony to Catholic life can be seen in the beautiful displays around the school which greatly enhance the learning environment for all. Our Lady of Lourdes School proclaims its faith proudly to all visitors.

Our Lady of Lourdes is a community which places a high value on its family atmosphere and the genuine care for its pupils and families. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the school's pastoral care, especially during recent lockdowns, and the support and efforts staff went to in order to ensure that children's learning and well-being remained a high priority. Parents comment on the strong communication they receive from the school and how their children are thriving in the inclusive community atmosphere staff foster. They talk about how the school raises children's awareness of others and its strong links with the parish.

Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning make for an atmosphere highly conducive to learning and personal development. They show a deep respect for one another and are developing a real understanding of Catholic Social Teaching. The CAFOD Easy as CST resources displayed on classroom doors, from Chikondi the Giraffe in Nursery representing the Common Good to DJ the Dolphin representing Distributive Justice, are constant reminders to pupils of their responsibility to others. Opportunities to support others are numerous and fully encouraged. Year 5 pupils relish the responsibility of being 'Guardian Angels'. Using their many talents, they organise games and activities for the younger children at lunch time. Ambassadors enjoy organising and suggesting fund raising activities to support a wide variety of charities and agencies – local, national and global. They spoke with great enthusiasm of the 'mountain' of food they collected for a local foodbank and the ways they have raised funds for CAFOD, the NHS, Children in Need and the recent war in the Ukraine amongst others. Pupils understand that fund raising is not the only way they can support others and talk of sharing their Nativity production with the Weavers Alms house community and singing at local care homes as well as writing Christmas cards for parishioners.

Behaviour for learning is exemplary, pupils collaborate exceptionally well during lesson time, giving each other time to speak and share their ideas. Staff are active role models of mutual respect. This is clearly seen in class where staff encourage pupils to ask questions. One pupil challenged the local priest by asking him, 'What impact has the pandemic had on your ministry?' clearly demonstrating a well developed understanding of vocation.

The leadership of the dedicated Headteacher and her senior leaders in promoting and developing the Catholic Life of the School is outstanding. Along with governors, they are passionate in ensuring that Our Lady of Lourdes is a nurturing place where pupils can grow and develop into young people with a sense of purpose and commitment and where the school Mission Statement is at the heart of the community.

Religious Education at Our Lady of Lourdes is outstanding. The provision made for Religious Education ensures that all pupils, irrespective of their starting points, make sustained progress throughout all key stages and achieve high standards as they move through the school.

The school uses the Come and See programme enhanced by numerous resources to supplement pupils' experiences, allowing them to learn both from religion and about religion. Teachers set high standards and have high expectations of their pupils. They use a variety of teaching styles and strategies to ensure that learning is enjoyable. Pupils report that they enjoy role play, hot seating and discussions as well as a variety of different types of writing in lessons, with a particular favourite activity being analysing and discussing Religious Art. This is clearly evidenced in pupil books where pupil responses show a real depth of thought and reasoning. Teachers ensure that pupils' religious literacy develops as they journey through the school and encourage the use of religious vocabulary in both written work and discussions. Strong teacher subject knowledge and high quality questioning, carefully structured and scaffolded, ensures that pupils are continually developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils in Early Years are given an excellent start to their Religious Education journey so that they are very well prepared for the subsequent challenges as they progress through the school. The study of other world faiths is well embedded and supported by both staff and pupils from these faiths who are enthusiastic to share their experiences with their peers. A beautiful display of world faiths is testament to the pride pupils take in sharing their faith.

Pupils' attitudes to Religious Education are exemplary. Their behaviour for learning, concentration and focus are all contributory factors in their progress and attainment. Their books are very well presented and contain a wide range of age appropriate activities which are built upon year by year. Work is well scaffolded to meet the needs of all pupils – to support and challenge as necessary. Additional adults are very well deployed to support learning, re explaining, checking understanding and helping to maintain focus.

Religious Education is led by a highly committed and very able subject leader, her enthusiasm is infectious and ensures all staff are committed to giving Religious Education the highest status. She is constantly assessing and developing ideas to improve outcomes for pupils and staff: the knowledge organiser is just one example of the innovative practices she has implemented to assess pupil progress. Colleagues are well supported in their teaching by regular coaching, mentoring and training opportunities to develop their practice. Highly effective systems are in place for new and non-Catholic members of staff who report that the atmosphere is very supportive. Staff are also given opportunities to observe outstanding practice within school. Regular and robust monitoring, both within school and within the academy trust, in year groups and across phases, using the diocesan assessment grids, ensure that teacher assessments are accurate. Pupils' peer and self-assessment is also accurate and demonstrates a good awareness and understanding of what constitutes a good response.

School leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is given a high priority. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Leaders ensure that the budget is in line with that of other core subject and that all staff have access to regular continuing professional development opportunities to develop and improve their practice.

Collective worship is integral to the life of Our Lady of Lourdes. Pupils are given many opportunities throughout the school day to participate in prayer, both the traditional prayers of the church and by writing their own prayers. Class prayer books are a beautiful testimony to the high importance the school places on prayer. These books show deep spirituality, care and compassion for others and an awareness of the different types of prayer including prayers of sorrow, adoration and thankfulness. Pupils are also encouraged to write prayers in their home language. During the inspection a pupil read out her personal prayer during the assembly. The beautiful prayer focus areas in classrooms are carefully maintained and pupils took great pride in informing the inspector that it is everyone's responsibility to take care of them. Pupils speak reverently of Zara's garden, named after a former pupil, as a place where they can go to for a peaceful moment in a busy day. Year 5 pupils also enjoy the daily minute's silence at 3pm as a time to remember what Jesus did for us all.

Classroom acts of worship are carefully planned and delivered by pupils who enjoy choosing readings from scripture, music and prayers to share with their peers. Well planned and resourced school assemblies allow children to sing joyfully, accompanied by live music. The reverence they give to assemblies and their sound knowledge of scripture is further testament of their commitment to their faith. Year 6 pupils were delighted to welcome the new Reception class children to their first school assembly earlier in the school year, their delight in helping them make the sign of the cross and leading them in prayer was clearly evident in photographs capturing the moment. Pupils' Lenten promises show a deep understanding of how they grow closer to Jesus during this special time of the church's year.

The school enjoys strong links with the parish and the two priests are regular and welcome visitors to the school. Pupils visit the parish church for Mass, with the priest commenting that they demonstrate very good responses and are able to take a leading role in reading and leading the prayers of the faithful. He also reported that the parishioners feel uplifted by the children's presence and engagement with the Mass. Younger children also visit the church to learn about the different parts of the church in Nursery class and about baptism in the Reception classes. Pupils enjoy celebrating the Church feast days throughout the year and they speak fondly of celebrating their school feast day with Bishop Alan when he was visiting the parish.

The Headteacher, her staff and School Governors are outstanding in promoting the provision for Catholic Worship. They are passionate and committed to delivering meaningful and purposeful worship to bring pupils closer to God.