



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

**Name of School:** St Ursula's Catholic Junior School

**Unique Reference Number:** 102332

**Inspection Date:** 27 March 2012

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

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

Type of School: Junior  
School Category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 239  
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body  
Date of previous inspection: **23.05.2005**

School Address:  
Straight Road  
Romford, Essex  
RM3 7JS  
Tel. No. 01708 343170  
Fax No. 01708 379590  
Chair of Governors: Mr Dermot O'Connor  
Headteacher: Mrs Clare D'Netto

## **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 Ursula's Catholic Junior School  
Straight Road  
Romford  
Essex  
RM3 7JS**

**Head Teacher: Mrs Clare D'Netto**

**Date of Inspection: 27 March 2012**

## **Description of the School:**

St Ursula's Catholic Junior School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the London Borough of Havering and in the diocese of Brentwood. The school is an average-sized primary school. The school serves the Catholic parishes of St Dominic in Harold Hill, Most Holy Redeemer in Harold Wood and Christ the Eternal King in Gidea Park.

### **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 eight lessons.
- Participation in an assembly.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the Headteacher, the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), Parish Priests, a member of the governing body, the School Council and other representative pupil groups.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

### **What the School does well:**

St Ursula's Catholic Junior School is a good Catholic school. The school is well led by a clear-sighted headteacher who is determined to take the school to the highest levels. Her belief in the school is supported by the confident and articulate pupils who took great pride in showing an inspector around their site to see features like the corridor of dreams which profiles the life and career ambitions of every pupil. Pupils are also excited by plans to take learning and faith into the outdoor areas through features as diverse as the allotment patches given to each year group and the projected willow-frame sanctuary for the Virgin Mary. Pupils very much appreciate the personal element given to their education because the headteacher knows them all by name, This was clearly demonstrated in a good assembly which linked the meaning of Easter Week to a treasure hunt and allowed the headteacher and staff to demonstrate the good care they give to their charges.

Provision is good. Expectations are well understood. Most lessons have a good level of challenge and engage pupils into giving good responses by the range of resources and questioning skills used. Almost all staff are comfortable with new technologies but there is also some over-reliance on worksheets. Display around the school reinforces the curriculum and especially cross-curricular links like responsibility for our world and for each other. In some lessons which are teacher dominated, provision is less effective because pupils are not expected to produce much written work and questioning does not include a reason for the answers to bring out the very best in able pupils.

Steps to promote improvement are good. The new headteacher has an accurate perception of the school and how she wants to take it forward. She is well supported in this work by local parish priests. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted although the school is at an early stage of using its multi-cultural community as an additional learning resource to expand pupil horizons and perceptions. Governors have a

clear idea of the strengths of the school and are beginning to offer greater challenge but this too is at an early stage.

Provision for prayer, collective worship and liturgical life is good because of the close involvement of local parish priests and the encouragement offered by the head teacher and the head of R.E. Opportunities for pupil input are increasing and indicative of the rising aspirations offered by initiatives like the corridor of dreams. The school's mission statement – 'to recognize God in everyday things – in our work, in our play and in the way we care for one another' is a pupil-friendly one.

The R.E. curriculum is good. It is based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme of study, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, and which is fully implemented. The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught R.E. The Head of R.E. is an experienced teacher who offers encouragement and support. Provision meets all statutory requirements but lacks an improvement plan with clear expectations and monitoring of progress. At present, planning does not fit in with the whole school improvement plan to reinforce the notion of R.E. as being at the centre of the curriculum and to build links with other subjects, including PSHE. The school has begun further training for staff, including increased access to CCRS courses.

Learners' achievement is good but expectations and challenge in some lessons are too low to allow high achievers to really fly or to take their independent learning to the top level. Pupils are keen on their faith and putting it into action but some learning is text book led and does not consistently allow pupils to bring in their own experiences.

Teaching is good. Teachers make effective use of questioning and of new technologies. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils were given a range of opportunities to reflect on the story of the Garden of Gethsemane and relate it to their own lives. Answers given to skilled questions required pupils to expand on their original answers and to use alternative, extended vocabulary. Subject skills are well-developed and the school is beginning to expand these by exposure to other learning communities. Use of teaching assistants is variable and not always a working partnership with the teacher. Presentation in books is generally good but marking and assessment sometimes contain only limited evidence of comments which would enable pupils to take their work forward.

The school has good capacity for further improvement because the focused headteacher is determined to take attainment to the highest levels, middle managers are on board and new systems and procedures are being implemented across the school. In addition, pupils feel appreciated as individuals but also recognise their obligation to contribute to the ongoing progress of their school in any way they can.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- **Develop teaching by sharing of best practice and further collaborative work between teachers and teaching assistants.**

- **Link the R.E. development plan to the whole school improvement plan to reinforce the position of R. E. at the heart of the school.**
- **Develop the use of marking and assessment to challenge pupils and consistently provide them with clear guidelines as to the way forward in taking work to the highest levels.**

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

St Ursula's Catholic Junior School displays a good Catholic ethos with a good capacity for sustained improvement. Pupils are very committed to the school and to making it as good a school as possible, in line with the aspirations of the new headteacher.