



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

**Name of School:** Holy Family Catholic Primary School

**Local Authority:** Essex

**Unique Reference Number:** 115158

**Inspection Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011

**Reporting Inspectors:** Mr Derek Kelly and  
Mrs Maureen Cosgrave

**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: 210  
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body  
Date of previous Inspection: June 2009

School Address:  
Kents Hill Road  
Benfleet  
Essex SS7 5PX  
Tel. No. 01268 792231  
Fax No. 01268 759274  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Julie Davidson  
Headteacher: Mr Peter O'Kane

## **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**

**Holy Family Catholic Primary School  
Kents Hill Road  
Benfleet  
Essex  
SS7 5PX**

**Head Teacher:                      Mr Peter O’Kane**

**Date of Inspection:                7<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

## **Description of the School:**

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the County of Essex and in the Diocese of Brentwood. The school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1965. It is an average sized one-form entry. The school serves the Catholic parishes of Holy Family, Benfleet with St Thomas More, Hadleigh, A very large majority of the pupils are of the Catholic faith. The school has achieved national Healthy School status and holds the Activemark award.

### **Record of Evidence Base:**

Two 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 4 complete lessons.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Participation in an Assembly and Morning Prayer.
- Meetings with the Headteacher, R.E. Co-ordinator, Assistant Priest and the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. Displays in the Classrooms and around the school

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

Holy Family Catholic Primary School is outstanding in its effectiveness as a Catholic school and displays many strengths. The headteacher and governors give exemplary leadership to its Catholic life and ensure pupils of all abilities, cultures and social backgrounds are challenged to develop spiritually, morally and academically. The inspirational headteacher leads a strongly cohesive staff team. Guided by the Mission Statement: *'We are the Holy Family: we are united in God's love. Following in His footsteps we aim to create a safe and happy learning environment wherein each child is encouraged and supported to reach their full potential'*, the whole school community work together to create a safe, stimulating learning environment, which has a direct impact on the personal well-being and educational success of the pupils. The excellent partnership with home and parish nourishes provision and makes the school a supportive, inclusive community.

Religious Education (R.E.) is central to the mission of the school. The 'Here I Am' Religious Education Programme, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, is fully implemented.

The lessons observed were nothing less than good with some outstanding features. The pupils benefit from consistently good teaching in religious education and make very good progress. The school is committed to continuous improvement, there is consistent planning in R.E. across all year groups, which is evaluated and informs future lessons.

Teachers plan their lessons carefully with clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils. Teachers display a secure understanding of the 'Here I Am' Religious Education Programme and have a coherent expectation of outcomes. A good range of teaching strategies are used so that lessons are lively and pupils are engaged. For example, talk partners and drama were used to good effect, as were picture prompts, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Teachers frequently share their own experiences to make lessons interesting and encourage pupil participation. One teacher talked about being at Sunday Mass where a pupil's baby brother was presented for Baptism, the pupil was invited to speak about the experience, in order to teach the class about Baptism. Another teacher made reference to their shared experiences at school assemblies to recall learning about initiation. Teachers used

very good questioning which challenged pupils to extend their thinking and encouraged use of key vocabulary.

Assessment in R.E. is a high priority and there are focussed assessment opportunities for the conclusion of each of the 'Here I Am' topics with 'End of topic' key questions.

The leadership and management of Religious Education by the R.E. Co-ordinator is excellent.

The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught R.E.

R.E. displays and artefacts, in the classrooms support the pupils learning and enhance opportunities for prayer and reflection. Each classroom has a beautiful focal point for prayer, placed at child level, which is well used to support personal reflection. Resources for the study of other world faiths are also appropriate and a variety of visitors from other faith groups, Jewish and Muslim, come to explain their faith traditions to the pupils.

The Mission Statement underpins all that is done within and beyond the school community. The pupils willingly undertake a number of responsible roles, such as; Class Monitors, House Captains and School Councillors. This reflects the school's commitment to nurturing each person as valuable and to encouraging personal endeavour.

Relationships in the school are exceptionally positive and pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly towards adults and each other. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pastoral care is outstanding because it is based on personal knowledge of pupils' needs.

Prayer is central to the life of the school with many opportunities for prayer offered throughout the day. The day begins with voluntary Morning Prayer, which is well attended by both pupils and parents, and where pupils readily participate in leading prayer.

R.E. lessons often include a time for prayerful reflection; teachers create a calm atmosphere for pupils to reflect on their learning.

The school's Millennium Garden with willow cross makes use of the outdoor space for worship, especially in the summer term, when classes use this area for prayer.

Collective worship is well planned to reflect community celebrations, the liturgical year and the 'Here I Am' Religious Education Programme. The inspection took place during the month of November when there was a particular focus on prayers for the Holy Souls, with pupils encouraged to pray for and remember their departed by placing their names on the prayer altar.

The Catholic ethos of the school permeates every aspect of the community. The Catholic life of the school is subscribed to by all the stakeholders – Governors,

the Headteacher and his leadership team, staff, pupils and their parents and carers.

Holy Family Catholic Primary School values links with parents and carers who are very involved with their children's learning and on receiving regular curriculum information, support them at home. One parent commented that, 'the school staff provide a nurturing environment in which children feel safe and comfortable.'

There is a proactive Friends of Holy Family which organises social and fundraising events to strengthen the school community. The Governors of the school are very dedicated and supportive of everything the school does and provide suitable challenge to the leadership of the school.

The school provides excellent opportunities for the pupils to develop a strong sense of community through links with the local Catholic Secondary schools, through attendance and involvement at the annual Deanery Mass for Year 6 hosted by the Secondary Schools and study days for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Links with the Parish of Holy Family, Benfleet is also a strength. The Assistant Priest, who stated that, 'The life of faith is palpable and permeates the whole school', is a frequent and welcome visitor. In particular he celebrates Mass at the beginning and end of the school year, attends assemblies and leads the Corpus Christi Eucharistic Procession.

Contributions to the wider community are through fund raising for Basildon Women's Aid, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, Great Ormond Street Hospital, Cafod, Rubbish Tip Kids and contact with Ezakheni Parish in South Africa to develop support projects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. They pray with confidence, have a well developed sense of responsibility and demonstrate a mature understanding of the needs of others. Provision for Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is comprehensive and the school has fully implemented the Diocesan Sex Education programme, 'Journey in Love'.

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

In order to promote existing and future ecology developments within the school community, develop a focus group for the 'Care for God's Creation'.

To introduce the 'Come and See' Religious Education Programme when it is published.

The inspectors endorse the improvements identified by the school in the Section 48 Self Evaluation Form.

Overall, Holy Family Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic School. It prepares its pupils well so that they make a successful transition to their Secondary Schools.