



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

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

**Local Authority:** Havering

**Unique Reference Number:** 102333

**Inspection Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011

**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: Infant  
School Category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 232  
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body  
Date of previous inspection: 7.5.2008

School Address:  
Straight Road  
Romford, Essex  
RM3 7JS  
Tel. No. 01708 345200  
Fax No. 01708 345200  
Chair of Governors: Mr Paul McGeary  
Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Dear

## **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 Infant School  
Straight Road  
Romford  
Essex  
RM3 7JS**

**Head Teacher: Mrs Patricia Dear**

**Date of Inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

## **Description of the School:**

St Ursula's Catholic Infant 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 two form entry school located adjacent to St Ursula's Catholic Junior School. The school serves the Catholic parishes of Harold Hill and 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, Head of Religious Education (R.E.), Chair of Governors, Parish Priests, staff and the pupils.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

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

St Ursula's Catholic Infant School is a good Catholic school with outstanding features. The school is focused on living out its Mission Statement: 'With Jesus as our special friend, we learn and pray together. We respect and care for ourselves, others and our school' by careful integration of all pupils into a harmonious learning community and increasingly close links with the neighbouring Catholic Junior school. This sense of community is immediately apparent from the warm welcome for visitors to the school and the large photographic mural showing the school at work in all its aspects. The Catholic life of the school is promoted effectively under the leadership of its committed acting Headteacher, who is very well supported by the Senior Leadership Team, Governors, Staff, Pupils and Deanery Priests.

Religious Education (R.E.) is at the centre of the school's work. The R.E. curriculum is based on the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, and which is fully implemented. Careful planning and monitoring systems ensure effective coverage of the R.E. curriculum. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is used in every classroom to enhance delivery of the R.E. curriculum.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Good lessons, with outstanding use of visual resources, electronic technology and questioning in many classes, engage pupils and ensure good progress. Lessons are pitched at an appropriate level and take account of pupils' starting points. Pupils are increasingly expected to make contributions based on their own experiences in response to teacher challenge. Best practice in this area is still developing because pupil contributions vary from class to class; this means that the impact of the teaching on pupil understanding is less clear in some classes than others. Teachers plan their lessons carefully in close consultation with the large team of highly effective support staff and take full account of different learning styles. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and knowledge and share experiences with their peers. Regular and thorough assessment procedures are in evidence across the school with focused assessment opportunities based on the 'Here I Am' topics. The R.E. Co-ordinator is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and this

reinforces the role of religious education at the heart of the school. Written work is carefully marked with helpful comments and indicates where the work was assisted or carried out independently. Good use of praise encourages further efforts. Behaviour in classes and throughout the school is good.

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

The displays and resources in the classrooms are of a good quality and support the pupils' learning as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each class has an R.E. display board, usually linked to the current R.E. topic and featuring children's work. There is an intentions board for all to use in the hall as well as a family prayer board. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Prayers are offered regularly during the day. R.E. lessons include prayers and time for reflection and calm as the candle is lit. Corridor displays highlight celebrations and school events, helping to reinforce the sense of community.

Friendship and support are at the heart of the school, in line with its Mission Statement. Pupils support and look after each other in and out of class, as School Councillors and as school helpers who feel they have much to contribute to 'their school'. The smiling faces all around the building reflect the extent to which pupils feel a sense of belonging. Relationships with adults are excellent and strong pastoral care is based on personal knowledge of pupil needs. The highly effective home support worker enjoys the confidence of the school community and has just embarked on a trip to Calcutta to embed links with an Indian school. The sense of belonging is increasing as closer links with St. Ursula's Junior School are forged. Newsletters refer to St. Ursula's Learning Community, incorporating both schools under a single heading. The governing body has a good understanding of the school and its work. They actively support and challenge the school as it seeks to continue its drive for excellence in all it does.

Collective worship is carefully planned in line with the liturgical year and the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme. The inspection took place on Remembrance Day, which featured a reflective assembly attended by two of the community's priests and a number of parents and carers. St Ursula's Catholic Infant School values these close links with parents and carers, many of whom lingered at the end to speak to the priests and staff. Pupils wrote and delivered the prayers and behaved reverently throughout. The Catholic ethos of the school, which permeates all it does, was readily apparent in the respect shown by the children and all stakeholders. Links with the parishes and priests are strengthening following a hiatus period caused by the death of a much-loved parish priest.

St Ursula's Catholic Infant School displays a good Catholic ethos. Students benefit well from the Catholic life and ethos of the school and appreciate the many benefits they receive from their schooling. They are aware of the plight of others in the world and raise money for charity as well as sending practical gifts. At the time of the inspection, a large

number of shoe boxes filled with goods for the less fortunate were piling up in the corridors prior to dispatch abroad.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. The Religious Education curriculum makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development because it reinforces the core school values of respect for each other and our families. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The school contains a rich cultural mix which is always celebrated, as seen in the comparison of Diwali and Christmas in R.E. lessons; a nursery group had the opportunity to taste Indian food, dance and reflect with the same sense of thankfulness and wonder as they would bring to Christmas festivities.

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

- **Make R.E. planning and teaching more cohesive across the school by sharing of best practice to turn the potential for outstanding into reality.**
- **Check more frequently with pupils to assess the impact of teaching on understanding.**
- **Continue to develop the liturgical life of the school so that it becomes exemplary in all respects.**

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

St Ursula's Catholic Infant School is a good Catholic school with outstanding features. The school has the potential to be outstanding. A strong Catholic ethos permeates the life of the school. The school prepares its pupils well so that they make a successful transition to their Junior School and are able to deal equally with challenges and triumphs.