



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: St Anne Line Catholic Infant School
Local Authority: Essex
Inspection Date: 22nd January 2019
Reporting Inspector: Mr Stephen Beck

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

Type of School:	Infant & Nursery	School Address:	St Anne Line Catholic Infant School & Nursery
School Category:	Voluntary Aided		Wickhay
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7		Basildon
Gender of pupils:	Mixed		Essex
Number on roll:	180		SS15 5AF
Appropriate Authority:	The Governing Body	Tel. No.	01268 524263
Date of previous inspection:	January 2014	Headteacher:	Mrs Angela Russell
		Chair of Governors:	Mrs Rachel Bradford

Information about the school

St Anne Line Catholic Infant School is a two form entry voluntary aided Catholic school in Basildon, in the county of Essex and part of the Diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parishes of The Most Holy Trinity, Basildon and St Thérèse of Lisieux, Laindon. There are currently 180 pupils aged 4 - 7 on roll and the school is over subscribed. In addition, a private voluntary sector nursery which offers 48 part time places is run under the auspices of the School Governors. The proportion of Catholic pupils is 66%. Pupil Premium is 10% and is lower than national average. 20% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with nine different languages represented, many who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of deprivation is higher than other schools nationally and at 0.3 is in the highest quintile. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 30% is above the national average. The school has recently opened new provision for the increasing number of ASD pupils. Extended school provision includes an early morning breakfast club and provision for after school care.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

The overall effectiveness of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It is an extremely welcoming school and is marked by a strong Catholic ethos which is achieved through the leadership and shared vision of the Headteacher and the Religious Education Leader and is supported by Governors and all Staff. Pupils thrive well and make good progress in Religious Education because of a commitment to continued improvement and development and a caring, supportive atmosphere.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The parents have a very high regard for the Headteacher and all the Staff. Pupils enjoy going to school. Behaviour is excellent and inclusion of all pupils is a high priority. Provision for curriculum Religious Education is very good, fully meeting the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Teaching is extremely effective and the curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils very well. Governors are encouraging and their tremendous support impacts on all aspects of school life. Issues raised from the previous inspection have been addressed. St Anne Line Infant School has excellent capacity to maintain and build on its significant strengths. Through its own self-evaluation, the school has accurately identified its strengths and areas for development and these have been included in the school development plan. The Headteacher, Staff and Governors are committed to further raising standards and developing all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. This school knows itself well and where it is going. From their earliest years, the pupils at St Anne Line Catholic Infant School experience what it means to "*Love to learn in Jesus, In Jesus we learn to love*" and subsequent years build on these firm foundations. The use of the letters of 'Anne Line' to give a context to the Mission Statement is helpful to pupils' understanding.

Assessment in Religious Education shows that a significant number of pupils start school with good knowledge of Catholic traditions and Gospel stories. As a result of very good teaching and learning experiences, pupils make rapid progress and their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 indicates standards at or above average. Those from non-Catholic backgrounds are very well integrated into the life of the school. Pupils are happy, hardworking and enjoy school as a result of the strong learning environment created for them and are keen to meet staff expectations of them.

The pupils have access to a good range of spiritual experiences, which the school is keen to extend further to include a retreat day. Pupils are aware of and understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year. Links with the parish are exceptionally strong and community relationships are a key feature and strength of the school. The Parish Priest gives a high priority to bringing these elements together, and, along with the tireless work of Staff, led by the Headteacher, a highly successful school community has been established.

Pupils at a young age accept that they are responsible for their own actions. They are polite, extremely well-mannered and keen to help and look after each other. They make very good progress in Religious Education and attain highly with prior learning being successfully built on. They display an excellent attitude to work during Religious Education lessons. They are respectful and reverent during times of Collective Worship. They are aware of the importance of prayer and that there are different ways to pray. They are comfortable praying either on their own or with their class or school community. They speak confidently about all aspects of their Religious Education work.

The highly skilled, experienced Headteacher is an excellent manager. She has built a strong leadership team who are loyal, supportive and deeply committed to the school. They work well as a team and with the dedicated Religious Education Leader do all that they can to ensure that the spiritual and pastoral needs of all are met in this inclusive Catholic school. The Parish Priest and Governors are extremely supportive and committed to ensuring that Catholic education of the highest standard is provided for all. They share the Headteacher and Staff's passion to excel and offer challenge and support where necessary. They see the Catholic Life as the core of the school and it is instilled in all that they do. The leadership of the school in promoting the Catholic Life is outstanding. The Headteacher, supported by a collegiate staff have a positive presence around the school, as well as a clear understanding of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school. The Religious Education Subject Leader is well supported by her predecessor in this role, who has provided a smooth transition in subject leadership. The Subject Leader guides and supports the Catholic Life of the School, by continually seeking out new and exciting ways to challenge and guide pupils along their faith journey.

There was a high response to the Parental Questionnaires issued in connection with this inspection. Analysis shows virtually 100% of respondents expressing total satisfaction with the school. As one parent wrote, *"My husband and I specifically chose St Anne's because it is a Catholic school. We have always been pleased with the teaching and ethos of the school. We just say, 'Keep up the great work'."*

What the school should do to improve further:

- Action the plan to work with the Basildon Schools' Cluster Group and newly forming Deanery MAT to share good practice.
- Utilise the recently established and developing 'Stay and Pray' sessions to provide more frequent, age appropriate, opportunities for pupils to plan and take a lead in Collective Worship.
- Consider establishing, possibly through the school newsletter, opportunities to raise the profile of the school's governors and their work.

CATHOLIC LIFE

Grade 1

St Anne Line Infant School has been graded as outstanding in its previous two inspections. It is to the great credit of all involved in the school that it has not 'rested on its laurels', but maintains a continual drive for improvement and desire to serve its pupils and community to the very best of its ability and it remains an outstanding school. The school's academic drive is focussed on providing pupils with the very best possible start to their educational career and to provide a strong foundation for them to build on as they move into Key Stage 2 and beyond. The school's success is nonetheless centred around the school's core purpose as a Catholic school. This is evidenced in displays and areas for reflection throughout the school, establishing the core purpose of the school to all those who visit. Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school with funds used to employ a Learning Mentor who supports the whole community, ensuring that there are no barriers to the effectiveness and mission of the school.

Pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility, including 'Playground Buddies', 'Eco Warriors' and 'School Council representatives. The School Council representatives are responsible for sharing ideas together and delivering messages back to their classes for further discussion. They have talked about issues relating to the wider community and have offered suggestions for fundraising to help those less fortunate than themselves.

The school's Mission Statement is actively present in all aspects of school life. Pupils can relate to the statement in a practical way and can show aspects of the statement in their everyday lives. The Mission Statement has recently been modified to ensure that it clearly expresses the purpose of the school and its mission in clear, pupil friendly language, in an age appropriate way. This is evident throughout the school in photographic posters, which capture the essence of the school's purpose and has had an impact as reflected in pupils' behaviour, motivation and attitudes towards each other, which are exemplary and it is noteworthy that Ofsted inspectors recognised this as a strength of the school.

The 'Swallows Nest' has been developed in the last three years providing a wonderful environment for children who have additional needs, in which to learn and grow. Pupils make excellent progress in their special classroom but know they are welcomed into the heart of the school with their own class group. The responsiveness of the pupils in mainstream classes and their excitement as their friends 'return' is strong evidence of the way they are included with and by their peers. This provision is already recognised as an exemplar.

There are many examples of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and ethical awareness evident in the school. Comments from visitors, parent views and over-subscription support this. Pupils and their families give generously to a broad range of charities for example, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, 'Helping Hands' the local food bank, Little Havens - carol singing, sweet sales, CAFOD and Children in Need.

Leaders ensure parents are well informed about the Catholic Life provision through Religious Education newsletters, weekly newsletters, the school website, class blogs and 'Stay and Pray' sessions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 1

Pupils make very good progress in Religious Education and achieve well, with the great majority achieving or exceeding age related expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. A number of pupils are working at greater depth and results are at least in line with those in other core subjects. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well, reflecting the effectiveness of the school's intervention and support systems. This is in part due to the support staff in school being highly aspirational themselves with a significant number having achieved level three in Childcare. The school encourages their further learning, for example, one LSA has begun a Foundation Degree and support staff have been assisted to gain qualified teacher status.

During the teaching observed as part of this inspection, pupils were keen to give of their best and do well. They were enthusiastic, responsive and able to reflect on their learning. Behaviour for learning was excellent. Pupils interviewed as part of this inspection clearly saw Religious Education as an important subject in their school and important to their own lives. They were keen to talk about their work and are proud of their achievements. One said, "I like Religious Education lessons because they make me think." Pupils' written work shows good curriculum coverage and a range of tasks and ways of recording their work. Standards of presentation are high, reflecting teachers' expectations and pupils' pride in their work. Pupils have an increasingly high standard of religious literacy and their work indicates good levels of thoughtfulness and reflection.

The excellent start given to pupils in the linked Nursery and through Foundation Stage is skilfully built on in Key Stage 1.

As a parent wrote on their returned questionnaire, *“My child has only been at the school since September. She is always encouraged to participate and regularly talks about what she has learned in class and assembly. She also talks about what she has learned in religious education and really enjoys Fr Dan’s visits. As parents we could not be happier with how she enjoys school and really feels part of the community.”* Another said *“My son enjoys religious education a lot. He is always excited to share what he learns in school about God when he comes home. I also appreciate how easy it is to explain religious activities to him because of how the school incorporates it into their curriculum.”*

Teachers engage and inspire pupils, who respond thoughtfully and attentively. This reflects very strong classroom management skills that channel some challenging pupils’ efforts into the task at hand, thereby creating a productive learning environment for all. Age appropriate probing questions enable pupils to explore and deepen their learning. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. Effective planning ensures that lessons are linked to pupils’ needs. The school has worked hard to develop robust systems of assessment and these are used effectively to inform planning, track pupil progress and target support and challenge. The school is managing required changes to the assessment system well, to secure a smooth transition to the new system. Moderation (in-house and external) validates teachers’ judgements in Religious Education. Pupils are confident in expressing and exploring their ideas and demonstrate a good religious vocabulary. Differentiation is evident in planning, questioning and learning activities and as a result, pupils are appropriately challenged to develop their learning.

Leaders and Governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education. They ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops’ Conference in every respect and that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education. Leaders and Governors ensure that Religious Education is regarded as the core subject in the school and has parity with other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, budget, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. Leaders’ and Governors’ self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is well informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in strategic action taken by the school leading to at least very good outcomes in Religious Education. The Self-Evaluation Document feeds into the general School Development Plan.

The leader of Religious Education has a clear vision for teaching and learning and an outstanding level of expertise in securing this vision and improving Religious Education. She leads the subject very effectively and attends in-service training, as appropriate, cascading relevant information to Staff and Governors and providing any necessary in-service training. She meets regularly with the Religious Education Link Governor to present updates on pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning. She attends cluster group meetings where good practice is shared across a number of schools. Leaders and Governors ensure that Religious Education is carefully and thoroughly planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different classes.

The school is fortunate to have a linked nursery where the excellent staff provide pupils with a comprehensive start to both their formal Religious Education and school. Pupils are active participants at a young age in collective acts of worship which saw them put together a central focal point and suggest the themes for the prayers of that day.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is excellent. Pupils show great reverence and respect during Collective Worship. They join in prayer and worship enthusiastically, singing joyfully and with actions when appropriate. This contributes significantly to the spiritual atmosphere, which is experienced by all those gathered together in prayer. Although the pupils are young, they are able to talk about how they have been involved in preparing and leading prayer in school and the part they take in Collective Worship. Pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals and of the Church’s liturgical year. They speak proudly of how they have prepared to celebrate a range of feast days and festivals and more recently Advent and Christmas. They know and understand the purpose of these celebrations.

The pupils also enjoy preparing for family 'Stay and Pray' sessions and are keen to join in the voluntary Rosary Club Praying Group. The school is beginning to involve classes in planning important events, for example the reflection time of 'Stay and Pray' as part of its development of enabling pupils' involvement in planning and leading liturgy. They are now running 'Stay and Pray' sessions for families which create a calm and uplifting atmosphere and involve the families in making valuable contributions. This enriched the prayerfulness of the session and modelled the power of prayer to the pupils. In the session attended it was notable how the informal atmosphere provided a safe environment for spontaneous prayer. A variety of prayer opportunities are available for the pupils. Despite being so young, the pupils are growing in confidence and are enthusiastic about praying independently. As a result of the different opportunities and experiences available for the pupils, prayer and Collective Worship contribute significantly to their spiritual and moral development. Their knowledge of prayer and liturgy is actively fostered. They recognise their school as a prayerful community and its Catholic character is reflected through high quality displays and artefacts in the school environment. Pupils are familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the Scriptures. Pupils are able to reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.

Whole class prayer is encouraged. This is often more structured with the prompt of the 'Prayer Hand' shared by Pope Francis, and opportunities are provided for more reflective individual prayer through class prayer boxes, baskets and trees. Teachers plan well and the subject leader ensures through the monitoring process that provision for Collective Worship has a high profile. Resources, including the use of ICT, are provided to enhance worship and are kept up to date. Collective Worship reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of backgrounds among the pupils. Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. They are enabled to pray formally and informally. Parents and carers are invited to join in celebrations.

Pupils attend the parish church for some events. Daily Collective Worship is either whole school or class based and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. It can reflect on the themes of peace, respect, love and faith which define the school; British Values such as kindness; the Sunday Gospel; the Word of God linked to the Come and See programme and it celebrates the achievement of pupils.

The Parish Priest is welcomed by the pupils, Staff and Governors of the school who all value the time he gives and chaplaincy role he plays. He regularly visits for assemblies, class prayers and conversation. St Anne Line Infant's provides attractive areas in school for prayer. It has a prayer garden which is well used. Parents feel very welcome and are enthusiastic in their praise of the school. They particularly like assemblies and one parent confirmed the impact school worship has at home, with the child saying, "*We have to pray before we go to bed.*"

The provision for Collective Worship is a high priority for Leaders and Governors. They have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Throughout the school, there is a strong sense of the traditions of the Church and its Catholic heritage. Their expertise enables them to accurately self-evaluate the delivery and effect of Collective Worship and to plan for its improvement. Leaders provide professional development opportunities, advice and assistance for staff on planning and delivering Collective Worship. Leaders by their behaviour, attitude and practice are very effective and inspiring role models for pupils and staff. They work hard to promote and provide thought provoking and accessible Collective Worship for the whole community of St Anne Line Infant School.