



## **DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**



### **Inspection Report**

**Name of School: St Helen's Catholic Primary School**

**LEA: Newham – URN 102771**

**Inspection Dates: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**Reporting Inspectors: Ms Colette Dawson and Mr Anthony Castle**

**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: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 412  
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body  
Date of previous Inspection: September 2003

School Address:  
Falcon Street,  
Canning Town, London, E13 8DD  
Tel. No. 020 7476 1785  
Fax No. 020 7476 7907  
Chair of Governors: Mr. W. Poulter  
Headteacher: Mrs. G. Hicks

**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**

**St Helen's Catholic Primary School,  
Falcon Street,  
Canning Town,  
London,  
E13 8DD**

**Head Teacher: Mrs G. Hicks.**

**Date of Inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**Description of the School:**

St Helen's Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic school situated in the London borough of Newham and in the Diocese of Brentwood. It is a large two-form entry school. The school is located in a rapidly developing area of East London, the borough of Newham still ranks as the fifth most socially deprived borough in the country. The school serves the Parish of St Margaret's in Canning Town although children do travel from other parishes in the Newham deanery. A very large proportion of the children are from minority ethnic groups and a quarter of the children are from refugee and asylum seeker families.

### **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 complete lessons.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Participation in a Key Stage 2 Assembly and a Year2 Prayer Service.
- Meetings with the Chair of Governors, Head teacher, the Parish Priest, the R.E. Subject Leader and the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. Displays in the Class rooms and around the school.

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

St Helen's is an outstanding Catholic School which displays many strengths. It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic identity under the inspirational and outstanding leadership of its Head teacher who is very well supported by her Assistant heads and her Leadership team, committed Governors, highly motivated Staff, Pupils and the Parish Priest. All the stakeholders demonstrate an outstanding sense of teamwork. St Helen's School is outstanding in every area. 'Leaders at all levels have constantly adapted the outstanding curriculum to capture the children's enthusiasm for learning whatever their backgrounds. The school has achieved this by giving a high priority to inclusion, raising pupils' self esteem and developing partnerships between the child, the school, the home, the Parish and the community.' Ofsted Report October 2007.

Religious Education (R.E.) is an area of high focus in the school. The '**Here I Am**' programme, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, is fully implemented. The 'Before You Begin' element of the process is securely embedded at the beginning of each topic. Staff plan in Year groups. They clearly understand the '**Here I Am**' process and use it effectively to provide a high quality and stimulating curriculum. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is used effectively to enhance the quality of lessons. There is a termly newsletter which informs parents of the '**Here I Am**' topics to be covered each term and suggests ways that parents can assist their child with their learning.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in R.E. is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are stated, explained and revisited. In all of the lessons observed, pupils were on task, engaged, highly motivated, challenged and enjoying their R.E. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils were enthusiastic and purposeful and worked well together. The school uses '**Every Child Matters' and its Mission Statement – 'United by its Catholic Faith, St Helen's is a multicultural school, committed to developing the spiritual, academic and social potential of each child.'**' as a model for everything the school does. This and relationships and class management are outstanding strengths of the school.

Assessment in R.E. is consistent in all year groups. It is systematic, rigorous and informative. There is a clear assessment focus for each of the '**Here I Am**' topics which gives excellent evidence of '**Relate**' knowledge and understanding. Positive feedback is given to the pupils and this enables them to make excellent progress. 'The current focus on Assessment for learning is having an impact on our assessment practices across the curriculum. Self and peer assessment is being used with greater uniformity.' (SEF/DP 2008)

The leadership and management of the R.E. by the R.E. Subject Leader are outstanding. Her leadership drives the assessment procedures used by all the teachers, she monitors R.E. lessons and is very supportive of all staff, teachers and teacher assistants. Her line of management ensures that there are good links between R.E., the liturgical life of the school and Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education.

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

Collective Worship, liturgical celebrations, the celebration of major Saints' feast days, the feast of St Helen and the school's links with the local parish are all strengths of St Helen's School. During the Inspection day the inspectors participated in an outstanding Key Stage 2 Assembly and a Year 2 'Prayer Time'.

St Helen's School promotes an outstanding and tangible Catholic ethos. This is subscribed to by all the stakeholders – Governors, the Head Teacher and her leadership team, the Parish Priest, staff, pupils and their parents. The School provides outstanding opportunities for the pupils to develop a strong sense of community through activities which engender feelings of loyalty and belonging. The School continues to develop strong links with other primary schools in the Deanery and beyond. In addition there are strong links with St Angela's and St Bonaventure's Specialist Schools. The emphasis on community is another outstanding strength of the school. This is effectively supported by the school's involvement with the East London Citizens Organisation (TELCO).

R.E. displays and artefacts, in the classrooms and around the School, are outstanding in their range and quality.

St Helen's Primary School values links with parents with every effort being made to improve and maintain communication with parents as their children progress through the school. There is a fortnightly newsletter informing parents of events such as the up to date news of the building project which is in the process of building a new school to replace the present subsiding school. The governors of the school led by the longstanding Chair of Governors are very dedicated, hardworking and supportive of everything the school does. There are excellent links with the Parish of St Margaret's. Staff and pupils appreciate the support and friendship afforded to them by their Parish Priest.

Pupils are given every opportunity to become responsible citizens. This is evident in their concern for each other and for those who are in need. This is particularly evidenced by the work and role of the School Council and the generous fundraising for the charities that the School supports. The older pupils take on a variety of

responsible roles, for example, Head Boys and Girls and Prefects. The school participates in the annual Diocesan Citizenship Awards held in the Summer term.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is an outstanding strength of the School. They celebrate different cultures and enjoy themed weeks such as the International Week, and the celebration of a variety Faith festivals and special days. Resources for the study of other faiths and visits to places of worship are outstanding.

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

There are no specific areas requiring improvement other than ensuring that the areas highlighted by the Section 48 Self Evaluation Form continue to be addressed. .

Overall, St Helen's Primary School is an outstanding Catholic School which displays many outstanding strengths. It prepares its pupils so that they transfer to their Secondary Schools as happy, well-adjusted young people who are a credit to themselves, their parents and their School. The School owes much of its success to the strong and committed leadership of the Head teacher, her Assistant Head teachers and her Leadership Team and to the valued support and expertise of her staff, governors and her Parish community.