



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

Denominational (S48) Inspection Report

Name of School: Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School
Local Authority: Havering
Inspection Date: 14th March 2019
Reporting Inspector: Damian Fox (Lead Inspector)
Tom Cahill (Associate Inspector)

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

Type of School: Secondary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 11 – 18
Gender of pupils: Girls
Number on roll: 800
Appropriate Authority: The Governing Body
Date of previous inspection: March 2014

School Address: St Mary's Lane
Upminster
RM14 2QR

Tel. No. 01708 222660
Headteacher: Mrs Kim O'Neill
Chair of Governors: Mr B Hoggett

Information about the school

Sacred Heart of Mary School is a girls' Catholic comprehensive school. The school is in Upminster, Essex, in the Diocese of Brentwood. It serves the parishes of St Joseph's, Upminster, St Mary Mother of God, Hornchurch, Our Lady of La Salette, Rainham, Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park, St Edward the Confessor, Romford, St Alban's Elm Park, Corpus Christi, Collier Row, and English Martyrs, Hornchurch. There are currently 797 pupils aged 11 - 18 on roll, including 189 in the 6th form. 92% of pupils are Catholics with most of the remainder coming from other Christian denominations and some coming from other faiths or none. 45% of the teachers are Catholics and five have the CCRS or similar qualification. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but with a proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, with 15% speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special needs is below the national average.

Key grades for inspection

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

The school has a distinctive Catholic ethos in the spirit of the Sacred Heart of Mary Order. The teachings and values of the Gospel are fundamental to the life and work of the school and permeate every aspect of school life. It is a happy, Christ-centred learning environment in which all students thrive. Everybody is welcomed and empowered to contribute. There is a highly effective partnership between leaders at all levels. They have a clear understanding of the Church's vision for Catholic education to develop young people of faith. Staff and pupils understand this and live out a mission true to the charism of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary. Governors are very active and provide highly effective support for Religious Education (R.E.) and the Catholic Life of the school. They are committed to the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. The Headteacher and her leadership team serve as powerful role models of Christian living and Catholic leadership. The Headteacher is knowledgeable and fully understands the strengths and areas for development in all areas of the school. She is highly respected by all members of the school community. Pastoral care is outstanding and reflects the school's strong moral purpose. The school is significantly effective in providing a secure, spiritual learning environment in which all students are inspired to "live life to the full". Pupils articulate a deep understanding of their responsibilities to each other. Consequently, behaviour is exemplary at all times. They are respectful of each other and work together to create a calm and prayerful community in which all are valued. The high level of inclusion ensures that no pupil is left out. Pupils are encouraged, praised and supported in lessons and assemblies. The subject leader is experienced and highly effective. As a result, standards of teaching and learning are excellent and reflect the important role RE plays as a core subject. The impressive progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reflects the dedication and hard work of teachers and the behaviour for learning demonstrated by pupils in their lessons. Collective Worship is recognised as fundamental to deepening the spiritual life of the school. It is led by a passionate and experienced Chaplaincy Lead. She is very well supported by the student-based chaplaincy team. Parents overwhelmingly agreed that the school gives unstinting support for their children and provides an outstanding Catholic education.

What the school should do to improve further:

- Keep the Religious Education timetable allocation under review in light of the requirements of the Bishops Conference.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the School and derive huge benefit from attending the Sacred Heart of Mary School. They embrace the demands and expectations that being at this school entail. As a result, they willingly take on responsibilities that promote and sustain the school's mission to serve and inspire a generosity of spirit. Through their attitudes and actions, students show their commitment to living the mission of the school, 'to live life to the full and bring life to others'. This is evident in the spirit of friendship and mutual respect that permeates the school. Students were particularly appreciative of the way they all felt included in the 'family' of the Sacred Heart of Mary. A member of the order said that 'the girls are at the heart of the school'. Students show an ability to express their thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. As a result, relationships between all members of the community are warm and respectful. Behaviour is exemplary at all times. The impact of student leadership is evident in the range of opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities. Sixth form student leaders are outstanding role models for younger students. They set an example of leadership and maturity to which pupils can aspire. Students are genuinely supportive of each other, for example the sixth form mentors and prefects who support pupils around the school and in form groups. Students' understanding of Catholic social teaching is evident in the awareness they have of the needs of the school and the wider community. Students are aware of and seek to respond to their responsibilities towards others. They respond generously to a range of opportunities to serve others. For example, raising funds for charitable causes during Advent and Lent for staff and pupils participating in annual pilgrimages with HCPT and the Diocese. They understand not only the importance of giving, but also the reason why they should be doing so in a Catholic school. The 'Corridor of Prayer' is a significant feature of the school. All members of the school publicly commit themselves to their faith with Lenten pledges. These are reinforced on a display board in the main entrance of the school and on displays in 'The Corridor of Prayer'. Parents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the impact the school has on their children. One parent commented that "God is at the front of everything the girls do".

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

The school is distinctly Catholic. The charism of the Sacred Heart of Mary Order is encapsulated in the school's Mission Statement, 'Ut Vitam Habeant', 'that others may have life'. It is central to the life of the school and 'Live Life to the Full' is a constant focus of assemblies. It is a clear and inspiring expression of love and service. The community overwhelmingly respond by creating an authentic Catholic school through prayer and service to others. The Memorial garden serves as a witness to the family of the Sacred Heart of Mary. It is a reflective space in which students who have died are remembered and prayed for by staff and students. The impact of the Mission Statement is evident in the joyful and harmonious relationships throughout the school. All staff are fully committed to its implementation, as confirmed by students who spoke warmly of the support, praise and encouragement they receive. They commented on the extent to which interaction between the year groups contributed to their well-being. Pastoral care is outstanding and serves the needs, concerns and strengths of each child. Policies and practices have established a spirit of care and compassion for all. As a result, students are able to grow in confidence and maturity. The school provides effective support for students with a variety of needs. The Sacred Space is a designated room which provides a safe haven for vulnerable students, most particularly those who suffer from anxiety. Behaviour is exemplary as a result of policies that are clearly communicated to students at their induction and consistently applied. Students confirmed that good behaviour is the norm because everybody respects and wants the best for each other. The efficacy of chaplaincy provision is profound. Its aim is to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to the school. It is instrumental in providing a range of opportunities for pupils to develop the practice of their faith. The strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high-quality relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community, reflect the shared ministry of all staff. Pastoral care represents a significant strength of the school, evidenced in interviews with governors, staff and students. All were eager to highlight the tangible togetherness and mutual high regard regardless of faith and background. Students highlighted how the supportive nature of

relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils across year groups contributes to their pastoral wellbeing.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

Leaders and managers are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibility to provide a school that responds to the needs and strengths of staff and students. They articulated a clear vision for deepening the impact of the Catholic Life of the school. Leaders have a well-informed understanding of the strengths of the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and areas for development. This is reflected in the self-evaluation which is a coherent reflection of their awareness of the strengths of the school and areas for development. Governors monitor and evaluate the quality of the Catholic Life by their presence around the school and attendance at liturgical celebrations. The Link Governor reports to formal meetings. Testimony from pupils and parents indicates that the school effectively maintains its distinctive ethos. The professional expertise and inspirational leadership of the Headteacher is a significant factor in the efficacy of the Catholic faith in the life of the school. The high priority given by her to promoting the centrality of the school's Catholic ethos is a living reality, evidenced by its modelling by the whole staff. Students recognise that they are supported. The powerful impact of the Sacred Heart of Mary charism is seen in the powerful and lived Catholic ethos of the school. The Headteacher said her aim at the outset was to build a school on the legacy of the Sacred Heart of Mary Order. The Sisters confirmed their pride in the way the school does this. The induction into the Sacred Heart of Mary ethos for new staff and regular inset on Catholic Life are instrumental in developing a deep awareness of what it means to be a member of the community. Constant communication between the school and parents was affirmed in parental feedback. They expressed their warm appreciation for the way the school complements and supports their work as parents. As a result, staff and students' understanding of the mission of the Sacred Heart of Mary is outstanding.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grade 1

Almost all pupils make progress in R.E. above the national average. Groups of students, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, make at least their expected level of progress, whilst some make outstanding progress. During the inspection, students displayed good, and in most cases, outstanding, age-appropriate standards of religious literacy. R.E. is held in high regard by students. All pupils approach lessons with great interest and enjoy their learning. This is evidenced by outstanding behaviour for learning and high levels of engagement in observations during the inspection. Students were able to articulate to inspectors a high level of motivation to learn as a result of the praise and encouragement they receive for their work and attitude. They demonstrated an ability to work collaboratively and independently to great effect. As a result of high quality teaching, student attainment in RE over the last three years has been consistently outstanding. All students achieved their expected levels with many exceeding their expected grades. Attainment at A level is consistently above the national average. The ALPS score was 2, up from 7 the previous year. This reflects the ambitions teachers have for each pupil. High expectations show the determination of staff to help pupils achieve at least expected outcomes in R.E. Challenging targets are set. Pupils respond positively to the challenge and grow in self confidence because of the encouragement and praise they receive from teachers. Lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work by inspectors confirm the school's self-evaluation and observations that teaching is always at least good and often outstanding. Priorities for improving teaching come from a detailed review of observations. Pupils make progress above the national average because well-structured lessons are delivered in ways that are engaging and well-paced. This reflects a high level of consistency across the department that ensures all pupils learn. A range of AFL techniques are effectively used within lessons to assess progress and to inform further planning.

Lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work during the inspection confirm the school's judgement that teaching is generally outstanding and never less than good. As a result, pupils make rapid and sustained progress in R.E. Evidence shows teachers differentiate effectively and demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. Challenging questioning techniques and appropriate levels of challenge were seen in the lessons inspectors observed. Teachers are highly effective in consistently planning and delivering high-quality lessons linked to pupils' current assessment. As a result, pupils continue to consolidate and extend their learning. Teachers have a high level of confidence because of their excellent subject knowledge and a range of inspiring methods that engage and challenge pupils. This was particularly evident in GCSE lessons. Students developed their understanding of key exam skills as a result of clear explanations and regular reinforcing of how to achieve top marks. A rigorous and effective assessment process at Key Stages 3 and 4 is undertaken in line with the school's policy. It is used to measure progress against set criteria and identifies pupils' strengths and areas that need further support. There is a consistency of high expectation and planning across the department. As a result, teachers are confident in using a wide range of resources and strategies that inspire pupils' engagement and learning. Pupils confirmed they receive support and extra challenge as appropriate to their needs.

Leaders and managers are ambitious for sustaining high standards of teaching and learning in R.E. Governors are effective in supporting and challenging school leaders. The Link Governor reports formally once a year to governors. Informal monitoring visits occur throughout the year. Governors are proud of the school's achievements and are determined to lead the school in continually improving standards. Leaders and Governors ensure R.E. has full parity with other core subjects as evidenced in outcomes and staffing. The Headteacher is committed to promoting the central role R.E. has in this outstanding school. She works effectively with her senior team who demonstrate strong and inspirational leadership of teaching and learning in R.E. The school is part of the Agnus Dei teaching alliance which offers the school opportunities to develop methodology and assessment with other schools. They regularly monitor teaching and learning through learning walks and joint observations with the Head of Department. The Headteacher meets the Head of Department fortnightly. This results in consistent feedback and accurate judgement. Leadership of R.E. inspires whole-hearted commitment from staff and pupils. As a consequence, standards of teaching and learning are outstanding. She uses her experience and expertise to support and improve the effectiveness of teachers of R.E. Her tangible support in the form of staffing and resources confirms that understanding goes beyond public rhetoric. The high quality learning displays in the suite of RE rooms provide visible resources to support students of all abilities. The curriculum across all key stages meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The allocation of curriculum time at key stages 3 and 4 do not yet meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school is committed to addressing the allocation for 2019-2020. This indicates governors' intent to meet the required timetable. The Edexcel Specification A is studied for GCSE. The second religion is Judaism. This meets the requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Grade 1

Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interests and inspire them in deep thought and heartfelt response. Students are at the heart of the community life of prayer. They affirmed their level of participation and their readiness to prepare and participate as singers, servers and readers. Acts of worship are enhanced by the strong support of chaplains and the Music department. Students feel a genuine share of ownership and embrace prayer and the celebration of Mass in a joyful yet respectful manner. There is a high level of respect and reverence for the prayer and liturgical experiences as evidenced in assemblies and prayer sessions during the inspection. A local parish priest confirmed that pupils pray and worship with sincerity and integrity. He commented that their preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation was excellent. Student leadership of Collective Worship is evident across the school. Every form class has a liturgical representative elected by peers. Sixth form students volunteer as senior prefects who support the students in years 7-9 in coordinating the preparation of collective worship. They are also commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers. There is strong support from the Music department with several choirs leading communal singing in liturgical celebrations.

The quality of provision for personal prayer and Collective Worship is outstanding. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils, irrespective of their age and faith background. Students confirmed the extensive and varied religious experiences that form the heart of school celebrations are a significant part of the daily routine of learning. Staff are integral to the provision of Collective Worship. The assembly and form prayer demonstrated the impact of high quality resources on the engagement of staff and students in prayer. Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. Themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season. The extensive range of weekly Masses, assemblies and prayer experiences serve to offer outstanding provision for all key stages. Celebrations of the Eucharist for the whole community take place at key liturgical moments throughout the year, for example, Founder's Day. Teachers are highly skilled in helping pupils plan and deliver Collective Worship. The Chaplain is passionate about supporting the growth of faith in each person. She said the aim of chaplaincy was to 'bring the Kingdom of God into the school'. She provides extensive resources to staff that deepen their understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship. The experience of living and working in a praying community has had a visible effect on the development of pupils. They spoke confidently and knowledgeably about the value of prayer in a Catholic school.

Leaders and Governors are deeply committed to the growth of a distinctly Catholic community. They are fully committed to the school's religious foundation. They ensure that Collective worship is an integral part of the daily life of the school. The Headteacher, supported by senior leaders, is passionately committed to building an authentic worshipping community. They are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within the school and draw upon their formation and experience as Catholic leaders to ensure pupils experience meaningful daily prayer and worship. Governors monitor and evaluate the quality of Collective Worship on their annual formal visit and by attending Mass and seasonal liturgies. The Link Governor regularly discusses the quality of Collective Worship with the Headteacher and reports to a full governing body. The Headteacher and senior staff provide a range of opportunities to celebrate Mass and come together for prayer. They inspire enthusiasm as seen with vibrant team of pupils across the school. The effectiveness of the Chaplaincy Lead was affirmed by staff and students. She is highly respected by all members of the community. As Head of Music, she enhances Collective Worship with singing through the several choirs in the school.