



## **INSPECTION REPORT OF DENOMINATIONAL CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

### **ST LOUIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL** Harris Court, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 2XZ

DCSF School No. 825/3376  
URN: 110480

Head Teacher: Mrs M Louisy  
Chair of Governors: Mrs B Bromley

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P O'Byrne  
Associate Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan

Date of Inspection: 20 October 2015  
Date Report Issued: 6 November 2015

Date of previous Inspection: 5 May 2010

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and  
in partnership with Buckinghamshire Local Authority

### **Information about the school**

St Louis Catholic School is a one-form primary school situated in north-west Aylesbury. There are 239 pupils on roll, 64% of whom are Catholic, mainly coming from the parish of St Clare and St Joseph. The pupils have a wide cultural heritage, 19 different languages are spoken in school and 44% have a first language other than English. The school has a very stable staff, 75% of those teaching RE are Catholic. The school is currently being extended so that it will eventually become two-form entry. A nursery unit is due to open in September 2016.

### **Key grades for inspection**

1: Outstanding                      2: Good                      3: Satisfactory                      4: Unsatisfactory

### **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

**Grade 1**

St Louis is an outstanding Catholic school. The Head Teacher together with the governors, other members of the senior leadership team (SLT), the Religious Education (RE) leaders and the chaplaincy team are very effective in promoting the Catholic dimension of the school. Staff are excellent role models for the pupils. Prayer is an integral part of the school's daily life and is central to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils behave very well, work hard and thrive within a strong Christian community where they feel loved, well supported and safe. Teaching is at least good and often outstanding. During the course of their time in the school, pupils make good or very good progress.

### **The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**Grade 1**

The school had addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection but the change in RE schemes, from 'Here I Am' to 'Come and See', means there are still some resourcing issues. The inspectors agreed with the overwhelming majority of the school's summative grading in the RE SEF and the areas discussed for future development. The governors and the SLT are committed to improving St Louis further. The Catholic dimension of the school is strengthened through the very good chaplaincy team, the parish links and the continuing support of the founding order. The Head Teacher, ably supported by the SLT and all members of staff, ensures the Catholic mission of the school is explicit and understood by the entire school community. The SLT, together with the governors, has the capacity to ensure outstanding effectiveness is maintained.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- review the standing of the school motto, prayer and mission statement to ensure the mission statement is understood by everyone
- review assessment initiatives and evaluate the impact on teaching and learning
- further develop resources and staff expertise in the teaching of other religions.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**Grade 1**

The extent to which pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Pupils love their school and are eager to participate in all aspects of school life. They are friendly and caring, ready to help others; they, in turn, feel valued, safe and well supported. Pupils enjoy the family atmosphere; they have a common sense of belonging, everyone is important, everyone belongs. They are proud of their roles as buddies, a part they take seriously, as was demonstrated during the preparations for the welcoming ceremony where Year 4 were paired with new buddies in Reception; a similar arrangement is in place for Year 5 with Year 1 and Year 6 with Year 2. Pupils can talk about the main events in the Church's year, know and understand the school motto and school prayer but are less knowledgeable about the mission statement.

The prayer life of the school permeates its very being and is central to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils know formal prayers appropriate for their age group and are relaxed in informal and spontaneous prayer situations. During collective worship and reflections observed, they were attentive and responsive. All classrooms have a simple, uncluttered prayer table which provide lovely focal points for reflection. Pupils are encouraged to compose their own prayers in class and at home. The pupils are involved in charity work throughout the year but particularly around Christmas and during Lent. Older pupils are aware of the needs within their own community and the wider world. All age groups have fund raised enthusiastically for CAFOD, the local hospice and a school in Kenya.

Chaplaincy is regarded as the shared responsibility of the parish priest, the SLT the RE governor and parish co-ordinator, the parish music leader and the teaching assistant (TA) team leader. Pupils respond very well to the activities organised by the chaplaincy team and really benefit from the wide range of experiences which enrich the life and work of the school. However, they do not understand the term 'chaplaincy' but they talk enthusiastically about the pupils' liturgy team and enjoy preparing and participating in liturgical celebrations. Pupils' beautiful singing enhances the celebrations and is also appreciated in the parish church and the local senior citizens' home.

Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They are interested in their RE lessons and co-operate and work well in pairs. Pupils have a very good attitude to learning and strive to achieve the learning objective. Overall and often from low starting points, they make good progress and achieve national expectations at the end of KS1 and, sometimes, beyond expected levels at KS2.

### **Leaders and managers**

### **Grade 1**

The leadership of the school's Catholic life is outstanding. The Head Teacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared and owned by all members of the school community. All the staff clearly promote the Catholic life of the school and are excellent role models for the pupils. The Catholic mission of the school is unambiguous and evidenced in its daily life and within the wider community. There is a range of lovely RE related displays in classes and around the school which are linked to topic themes, the liturgical year, particular events or specific prayers.

The two RE Leaders, one for curriculum and one for liturgy, are enthusiastic and highly motivated to ensure RE is regarded as a core subject. Both are very good teachers who are able to demonstrate lessons or work alongside colleagues. INSET is used effectively to support and develop staff skills and subject knowledge. The leaders work hard to support colleagues' planning and assessments of pupil's work. New assessment procedures were introduced last year but these have yet to be fully evaluated

The governors are very aware of their responsibilities and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There are two linked RE governors who are extremely knowledgeable about the school and they have a good understanding of its day-to-day activities. There are regular monitoring visits and reports prepared for the Governing Body (GB). The GB has arranged for the forthcoming expansion, from one to two form entry, to be introduced year on year to ensure the wonderful ethos of the school is maintained and nurtured as new pupils, parents and staff are welcomed into the school community.

The school is highly regarded by its parent body. One parent wrote, "It feels like a family – staff and pupils know each other well, it recognises children as individuals and supports their development in all areas, not just academic." Another, "Children are encouraged to look after each other, especially the younger ones as buddies. Children are caring and thoughtful. Good balance of music, drama, sport and academic studies". Parents, parishioners and staff recently supported the national MacMillan's coffee morning appeal.

## **Provision**

## **Grade 1**

The chaplaincy team ensures collective worship is well planned and there is a variety of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Masses are celebrated in school, special assemblies are held and good use is made of the prayer room which provides a tranquil space for small groups. The school offers a wide variety of clubs and enrichment activities which provide opportunities for the development of skills and interests. Achievement in school and outside of school, is celebrated. Besides special assemblies for mothers and fathers, a third is organised for grandparents who are regarded as important members of the school family; several parents are former pupils. House assemblies are led by Year 6 pupils and members of staff lead the rosary daily throughout October.

Good planning, lively pace, open and challenging questioning and effective use of talking partners result in teaching being at least good, often outstanding. Particularly good differentiation was seen in Year 1. In Year 5 good links were made with the special month of October when work on the wedding at Cana was linked to the rosary and the mysteries of light. Occasionally, some opportunities are missed to challenge pupils but, overall, they make good progress. RE books are well presented and reflect the pupil's pride in their work. TAs are effectively deployed and provide good support, particularly for EAL and SEN pupils.

The school has been working on the assessment of pupils' RE attainment levels with the local group of Catholic schools. Pupils' work has been moderated within the group and shared in school to ensure members of staff plan well to meet the needs of pupils. The results are not currently shared with pupils so, unlike English and Mathematics, they do not know their RE levels or what they need to do to progress to the next level.

The school devotes 10% of teaching time to RE and uses the diocesan recommended RE programme, "Come and See". The curriculum is enhanced through effective links with the local parish. One class had just visited St Clare's church and pupils confidently described the different parts and symbolism of the baptismal ceremony. Drama is also incorporated into the RE curriculum with role play observed in Years 2 and 3. The RE curriculum is further enriched through the school's charity work, its musical flair and its links with St Louis schools worldwide.

The inspectors would like to thank all members of the school community for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended during their visit.