

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 48
OF
THE EDUCATION [SCHOOLS] ACT 2006**



**ST. PHILOMENA'S INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
53 HADLEIGH ROAD
FRINTON ON SEA
ESSEX C013 9HQ**

RE-INSPECTION

DATE: 12TH March 2007

**BY: Sr Jude Groden RSM
Fr Roger Barralet OFM**

A Report on behalf of the Diocese of Brentwood

Introduction

The Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education [Schools] Act 2006 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 the Governors, Headteacher, Staff and pupils of the School both before and particularly during the Inspection. The Inspectors wish to express their gratitude to all concerned.

The focus of the Section 48 Inspection was:

- a. Classroom Religious Education
- b. The Catholic nature of the School through;
 1. Worship
 2. Links with the Catholic and wider community
- c. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

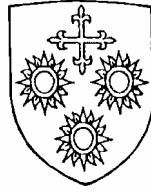
Basic information about the school:

Name of School:	St Philomena's Independent School
Type:	Primary
Status:	Voluntary aided
Number on roll:	141
Age range:	3-11
Head Teacher:	Mrs Bernadette Buck
School Address:	53 Hadleigh Road Frinton On Sea, Essex C013 9HQ
Telephone No.	01255 674492
Chair of Governors:	Mr Whybrew
Date of Inspection:	12 th March 2007.

Record of Evidence Base

Two Inspectors were at the school for the equivalent of two inspection days.

- The study of pre-inspection documentation including SEF/DP.
- Observation of 6 lessons.
- Participation in 3 class based assemblies.
- Observations of RE displays and Prayer Corners in classrooms and around the school.
- Meeting with the Head Teacher, who is the RE Co-ordinator.
- Meeting with a representative group of pupils.
- Conversations with various members of staff.
- Conversations with a number of pupils.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work



The Section 48 Report

**St Philomena's Independent School
53 Hadleigh Road
Frinton on Sea
Essex C013 9HQ**

Head Teacher: Bernadette Buck

Date of Inspection: 12th March 2007

Information about the School

St Philomena's is an Independent School for boys and girls 3 to 11 years of age.

It was established in 1936 by the order of the Sisters of Mercy and early in 1987 the St Philomena's Trust was formed to maintain the efficient running of the school and to continue the high ideals set by the sisters. In 1996 it became possible to purchase the house next to the school, now called Clover House and more recently a property was purchased called Jubilee House to expand the number of pupils.

The school is staffed by 8 full-time teachers including the Head Teacher and 6 part-time teachers, 3 of the staff are Catholic and 2 hold the Catholic Teachers' Certificate.

What the school does well

St Philomena's is a very good Catholic School with many outstanding features. It is firmly committed to developing its Catholic identity under the inspiring and dedicated leadership of its Headteacher, who is the RE Co-ordinator. The senior management is well supported by a highly motivated and welcoming Staff, enthusiastic pupils, supportive Governors and Parish Priest.

Teaching and Learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning in religious education [RE], across the school ranges from good to outstanding. Teachers plan lessons effectively, learning objectives are clearly stated, explained and revisited. In lessons that are very good or outstanding, pupils are on task, engaged, highly motivated, challenged and enjoy religious education.

Good opportunities are offered for most pupils to work collaboratively which results in empowering very good speaking and listening skills. A focussed form of questioning used in some lessons elicits deep and profound responses and contributes to a high standard of learning. Lessons could be developed further by the consistent use of reflective openings and conclusions and the use of music which is an the outstanding strength of the school. There is productive use of Prayer Corners in all classrooms.

The quality of learning is good to outstanding. Pupils work well, are very articulate and display in oral work, particularly, and in some written work, good creative, reflective thinking.

There is some good evidence of opportunities offered for pupils to write in R.E. which could be further developed to ensure consistency of high expectations in all levels of provision. There is consistency in regular marking but few formative comments. Verbal support however, is given to encourage the children to improve further the quality of their learning.

Monitoring and assessment in R.E. is an identified and developing strength of the school. Pupil evaluations of topics are evident in some classes and there are structures and strategic plans in place that will continue to raise further expectations in this area.

The **HERE I AM** programme is fully implemented, which is the programme recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese. The school has good resources which include a wide range of Bibles and the visit in Years 5 and 6 of the

'Bible Explorer Programme' in the summer term support *Relate/content* and the teaching of Other Faiths.

The school meets both the national and diocesan requirements in allocating 10% of curriculum time for taught R.E. This includes 5 hours for the teaching of Other Faiths.

Worship

The school offers a variety of opportunities for developing the reflective abilities of pupils both individually and in groups through: quiet reflection, prayer, some R.E. lessons, worship, music, creative displays and the appropriate use of the school's chapel.

School Masses are celebrated both in the school and the Church.

The School's Mission Statement is significantly integrated into all aspects of school life.

Displays around the school are of a very high quality. These highlight with colour and splendour the Catholic beliefs of the school, liturgical season, our global family, and their patroness St Philomena.

All classrooms have a display that portrays the **HERE I AM** topic and a respectful Prayer Focus with artefacts, Bibles, candles, crucifix, children's own prayers, reflections and appropriate posters.

There is an assembly schedule in place. This includes whole school and class led experiences. Class led assemblies only were observed during the inspection days. These could be enhanced further through the use of high quality music and singing which is an outstanding strength of the school.

Children approach collective worship expectantly and with a heightened awareness of coming to meet the Living God.

There is outstanding evidence of the school's rich prayer provision.

Opportunities are offered for formal, reflective, spontaneous and liturgical prayer.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is an outstanding strength of the school. This was recognised by ISC inspectors

last year. The present inspectors would re-affirm the outstanding quality of community and family spirit within the school. This is particularly evident in relationships between the children, and children and staff.

There are many rich and varied opportunities offered to pupils to celebrate and study the cultural diversity our world. This is evident in the school's link with other schools with a similar patroness, in Surrey and South Africa and the study of Japanese culture.

The school offers significant and outstanding provision for pupils to become responsible citizens. This is evident in their concern and respect for each other and for those less fortunate than themselves. The children love and care for their school and are much valued, guided, supported and empowered by all staff who are good role models.

The current provision of sex and relationship education is supported by diocesan guidelines and the recommended resource "A Journey in Love".

There are excellent links with the Parish, Parish Priest, the Sisters of Mercy, all Primary and Secondary schools in the area including the Catholic schools, Diocese and Local Education Authority.

The Headteacher who is the R.E. Co-ordinator is highly dedicated, enthusiastic and ensures that Religious Education in the school has the same rigour and profile as that of other core subjects. She is well supported by her hardworking and dedicated staff.

The issues raised at the last inspection.

Efforts have been made to appoint an RE Co-ordinator. The Governors are encouraged to pursue an appointment in this important area, so that the Headteacher can be spared this extra responsibility.

What needs to be improved

Continue to build on plans already in place to improve the quality and use of assessment both by teachers and children.

Overall

Overall, St Philomena's Catholic Independent School is a very good school with many outstanding features. It offers its pupils a rich provision that enables most pupils to reach their full potential, through the dedicated leadership of its Headteacher, who is the R.E. Co-ordinator, enthusiastic staff and its serious commitment to its Catholic identity in teaching and learning. This is further exemplified in the living out of the vision expressed in the Mission Statement and through the values espoused by the school's patroness, St. Philomena. This school is an oasis of social cohesion in the Diocese.