



# **DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT**

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on  
behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

**URN 101834**

**Laleham Lea Catholic Independent School**

**29 Peaks Hill**

**Purley**

**CR8 3JJ**

**Inspection date: 3 October 2019**

**Chair of Governors: Ms Yvonne Epale**

**Headteacher: Ms Karen Barry**

**Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck**

**Ms Anita McWeeney**

## **EDUCATION COMMISSION**

St Edward's House, St Paul's Wood Hill, Orpington, Kent BR5 2SR  
Tel 01689 829331

**Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes**



### Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Laleham Lea is an Independent one form entry Catholic day school for boys and girls aged between three and eleven. The school has a long history, being one of several small, private schools which opened in the district at the start of the 20th Century. It has been in existence for over 100 years and now operates as an independent charitable trust. From 1963 to 1977, it served as the preparatory school for a nearby senior school, with whom the school still maintains close links, using its chapel, fields and halls. It became a mixed school in 1994, and the Nursery class was introduced in 1995.

The school is situated in the Croydon Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parish which the school serves is St John the Baptist, Purley, although pupils also come from a number of other local parishes including St. Elphege's, St. Dominic's, St. Aidan's and St. Columba's. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is currently 61%. The school also welcomes a number of pupils from other faiths sympathetic to the school's ethos. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

Currently there are 112 pupils on the school roll with the majority being of White British Heritage although the community it serves is a culturally diverse one from local Boroughs such as Croydon and Sutton. This means languages spoken by students have included Russian and Mandarin and currently include Spanish, French and Italian although for these pupils English is not at an early stage of development and the proportion of pupils from homes where English is spoken as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at 9% is well below the national average. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is generally above average.



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Laleham Lea is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- Religious Education is exceptionally well led with the partnership between leaders at all levels being highly effective. They have a clear understanding of the Church's vision for Catholic education to develop young people of faith with a commitment to serve others. They are ambitious for each member of the school to achieve excellence. Governors play a significant role in ensuring the school is a genuinely Catholic school. They are knowledgeable and fully understand the strengths and areas of development in all areas of the school.
- The school's very strong Catholic identity permeates all aspects of its learning environment. Pupils are confident and articulate users of religious vocabulary and demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability.
- Teaching engages pupils who demonstrate outstanding behaviour for learning across the school. They are thoughtful, polite and well-mannered, exhibiting a strong empathy and practical support for those less fortunate than themselves and for the global environment.
- Prayer and worship are central to the Catholic mission and ethos, and are enhanced by high quality music. Pupils respond enthusiastically and respectfully in acts of worship. They are inspired by the chaplain recognising and valuing his personal faith and commitment to them.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

Whilst the school has no significant areas for development it should;

- Continue to embed assessment to achieve greater consistency of practice utilising the new Religious Education standards and moderation opportunities through increased participation in the Deanery schools' cluster group.
- Utilise the strong behaviour for learning that has been established to provide pupils with greater opportunities to facilitate the extending of pupil led learning.
- Embed within the Religious Education scheme of work a more extended programme covering the teaching of other faiths.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.	1
<b>Catholic Life</b>	<b>1</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>2</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	2
<b>Collective Worship</b>	<b>1</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	1



## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- Laleham Lea is an outstanding school with particular reference to its Catholic life. It is to its credit that under its ISI inspection, inspectors noted, *'Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate self-confidence and a sense of self-worth which reflects a high level of personal development, fostered by the school from the earliest years. Through assemblies, through liturgical services including the weekly celebration of Mass, in lessons and in their interactions with teachers and each other, pupils are encouraged to be reflective and to be aware of the needs of others'*. Inspectors likewise recognised these strengths during this inspection.
- As a parent wrote, *'Laleham Lea is an outstanding school that cares deeply for each of its pupils. It is a school that goes the extra mile to ensure happiness, safety, wellbeing and religious identity, which it sees as just as important as academic progress. The school is not just an education forum but a family'*.
- The Catholic Life at the school is outstanding because the well-being and personal and spiritual development of pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's vision and mission.
- The quality of Religious Education is very good because staff know their pupils well and consistently teach lessons which engage them, ensuring progress and achievement.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Staff plan and lead high quality Acts of Worship and pupils act with the deepest reverence.
- Pupil voice is strong at the school with one pupil describing the school council as, *"An opportunity for us to put our ideas forward and be heard. We have an impact such as our plans for a prayer area, the introduction of school meals and new play equipment"*.
- Priests from the local parish are also regular visitors to the school and actively support the school's Collective Worship. Their input into school life is greatly valued by the school community.
- It is a school that truly lives out its mission statement that says it will, *'Recognise that Gospel values are central to the life of the school, and aim to create a loving, welcoming environment in which pupils may grow intellectually, socially and emotionally in an environment in which their talents are recognised and fostered and their weaknesses treated with compassion'*. In addition to, *'aiming to lead pupils towards tolerance, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others so that they may grow up as well balanced individuals with a strong sense of personal identity and an awareness of God's love'*.



- The statement is frequently referred to and through this it consistently strives to recognise the uniqueness of each individual pupil promoting self-esteem and self-confidence.

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

- Leadership and management over the current headteacher's tenure has developed as an absolute strength of the school. She has a clear vision of Catholic education based on Gospel values which is reflected in all aspects of school life.
- The members of SMT, all Staff and Governors demonstrate high aspirations and commitment to the Church's mission in education with spiritual and moral development as a priority to enable the school to be a role model to all.
- The staff and Governors work effectively together to create a strong cohesive team which ensures that every pupil is nurtured and uniquely valued.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school are being rigorously undertaken to develop strategic planning, as reflected in the well-considered School Development Plan and Religious Education Action Plan that reflects a truly child centred school.
- The staff within the school set high examples with regards to expectations of each other and in living out the Gospel values.
- The Governing Body takes a keen interest in the School development priorities through effective Learning Walks, Curriculum Meetings and Whole Governor meetings to identify areas for development and resourcing and actively consults staff and parents regarding the school's Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy.
- The Catholic life of the school is rich in opportunities for pupils to encounter God and deepen their relationship with Him as a loving, compassionate Father. This includes prayer, both traditional and informal, liturgies and Religious Education lessons where pupils receive direct teaching of the faith. Through the relationships and support for each other, pupils, staff and parents enjoy within the school community, they are helped to come to know and love God.
- Class focal areas and displays of Religious Education work in classrooms and around the school are of high quality and help to further pupils' sense of commitment and responsibility to themselves, to others and in the wider world.
- Pupils have a true understanding of the school's mission statement and reflect on this regularly.



- Behaviour around school is exemplary because the school communicates clear and consistent expectations to all pupils. All pupils are encouraged to embrace personal responsibility and older pupils facilitate opportunities for reconciliation.
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high-quality relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. It is a wonderfully calm, harmonious and prayerful community.
- The school empowers pupils to live the mission of the Church with opportunities to serve the local and wider community. They are inspired and encouraged to give of themselves to making Laleham Lea an authentic Catholic school.

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

- The school's leadership is committed to the mission of the Catholic Church in education. The Headteacher and deputy Headteacher, who is the subject lead, provide heartfelt inspiration to the whole school community through their passion to make the Catholic Life of the school the best it can possibly be.
- Leaders at all levels in the school, including the governing body, have very high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. The development and sustenance of an authentic Catholic ethos is viewed as a core leadership responsibility. Governors are role models of service being proud to be associated with Laleham Lea.
- The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. The very effective work of the governing body is evident in their understanding of the detailed evaluation and monitoring of Catholic Life across the school.
- Laleham Lea engages very well with parents and carers who describe how well it promotes the Catholic Life of the school through effective communication using newsletters, social media and its website. They say that they feel well informed and part of the mission to make it the best it can be for all pupils.
- The school makes good use of its engaging website to celebrate the religious life of the school in addition to being an information giving tool.
- The school's Chaplain is a strong member of the Governing Body as well as a frequent visitor to the school, regularly leading a weekly Liturgy or celebrating Mass. He is always willing to visit classrooms to support the pupils in their understanding of the syllabus e.g. Baptism, role of Priests and the parts of the Mass. His input and the strong pastoral role he plays to the whole school community is highly valued and appreciated by all.



- From the point of first contact a welcoming and caring ethos pervades the school. This enables both adults and pupils to flourish in a nurturing community where each person is loved and valued.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.**

- Pupils said they enjoy curriculum Religious Education. Throughout lessons, pupils are actively engaged in their learning and enjoy the challenges the curriculum offers.
- Pupils comment on how they *'Really enjoy RE'* and how, *'During lessons we can learn exciting information in different ways particularly art and role play'*.
- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of their Catholic faith and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- During the inspection, pupils demonstrated independent learning and, through discussion with the inspectors, could explain and show examples of work where they had been challenged and inspired.
- Pupils make rapid progress through all Key Stages so that by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are in line with, or exceeding, age related expectations for the vast majority of pupils. Assessment and tracking seen, indicate that all groups of pupils make very good progress in Religious Education.
- Pupils are encouraged to record and to communicate their ideas using a range of strategies, including posters, prayer and sequencing activities.
- Staff meetings are used to share best practice on developing assessment opportunities and confirm that all staff are committed to individual assessments so that pupils are not disadvantaged by poorer literacy skills in reading and writing.
- The school uses 'The Way The Truth and The Life' scheme, supplementing it as appropriate, thereby meeting the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Governors and school leaders place Religious Education at the centre of the school's curriculum. They spoke confidently to confirm how well they monitor and evaluate provision for Religious Education and this is supported by documentation.
- Working together, teachers have grown in confidence in their use of the scheme along with other resources to enrich the curriculum. The subject leader provides good support for existing and induction for new teachers which demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement in Religious Education and underpins continual growth

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.**



- The school's strong Catholic ethos, high expectations and good behaviour management means that nearly all pupils demonstrate excellent concentration.
- Lessons observed at the time of the inspections were never less than good. Some exhibited some outstanding features, most notably through some strong cross-curricular links, high standards of literacy within Religious Education, time being given to deepen the understanding of a concept and opportunities for pupils to drive aspects of their own learning. This practice could be usefully disseminated across the school.
- Observations and interviews show pupils are keen to learn, can work collaboratively or independently and enjoy opportunities for paired and group talk to discuss key messages within their lessons. These opportunities could usefully be extended to provide more in depth discussion opportunities. All teachers have high expectations for all pupils. This is reflected in the marking of pupils' work. Teachers' feedback enables pupils to respond fully to questions of faith in their own lives.
- Pupils' Religious Education books contain a variety of work, which is consistently and beautifully presented with appropriate activities for the different age groups and abilities.
- Teaching in Religious Education brings clarity to the relationship between faith and life and between faith and culture. Pupils are inquisitive learners and keen to ask questions and find solutions to problems. They indicated they would welcome opportunities to extend their learning through more independent opportunities to explore Religious Education topics.
- All teachers have excellent subject knowledge and were seen to challenge pupils to respond to questions about their own and others' feelings. Pupils are morally aware of the requirements of living out their faith in their everyday life. It would be opportune to review and extend the teaching of other faiths.
- Pupils are continually encouraged to celebrate their achievements and efforts. This builds up their confidence and encourages them to be good role models.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.**

- Religious Education is led by a highly committed and able deputy Headteacher whose documentation is well organised and of a high order, thereby servicing the needs of her subject well. She only took up her post in September but has already made an impact, building on existing strengths through her clear vision and drive to move her subject forward.
- Assessment in Religious Education is established and takes place on a regular basis to validate teachers' judgements. It is currently being adapted to take account of



the new Religious Education standards with plans to move it on to the school's information management system in line with other subjects. External moderation has been undertaken with another school and it is planned to develop these opportunities further through the Deanery cluster.

- All staff are robustly supported so that teaching can be continually developed. A comprehensive range of monitoring activities are used including lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutinies. These identify strengths and weaknesses and inform school development planning, as well as the effective sharing of good practice. The subject leader's clarity of vision marks a strong capacity for further improvement which is reflected in the school's action plan.
- The Headteacher, Religious Education subject leader and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference throughout the school. They do this through ongoing monitoring and self-evaluation increasingly involving leaders at all levels. As a result of this, teacher's challenge pupils to consistently reflect on the deeper meaning of faith in their lives.
- The school is developing the role of link governor for Religious Education to support current information sources for governors such as the regular agenda item at governing body meetings and school visits.
- Leaders and governors are able to identify areas for further development and the strategies needed to address these in the constant drive towards school improvement.



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- Prayer and collective worship are central to the life of the school and pupils responded positively to the act of collective worship observed as part of this inspection. It was a whole school assembly led by the subject leader. Quiet entry music, a focal point and candles created an atmosphere conducive to worship and reflection. Pupils were observed enjoying coming together as a community in prayer and worship. They responded positively to the good use of IT resources enriching the theme making it more accessible to them all. Pupils spoke and read clearly, with confidence and intonation. Singing concluding the celebration was joyful, reflecting the musical strength of the school.
- Assemblies and liturgies offer opportunities for thoughtful reflection, discussion and other activities. They enable pupils to share their Religious Education learning with others.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its feasts and seasons. They enjoy describing how these are celebrated in school and the part they have played in these, examples include Advent and Lenten preparation and Stations of the Cross. They are encouraged to both participate and lead collective worship at a number of levels.
- There was strong evidence through discussion with pupils that they are becoming increasingly involved in the planning, preparation and leading of worship. The now well established Faith Monitors who currently enthusiastically engage with their role by, "*Encouraging children to pray*" and by supporting a prayer club among other tasks. They could usefully have their role extended to the worship aspect of the school's religious life.
- Pupils experience a wide range of prayer styles and worship activities. They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and at ease composing and using their own prayers. They know that prayer and worship develop their relationship with God and that their prayers can help others as well as themselves. Pupils write their own prayers and all classes have a book of prayers, which they use in class worship.
- Pupils were witnessed responding well to opportunities for voluntary prayer and reflection with which they were clearly comfortable.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- School collective worship is outstanding including a wide range of celebrations which offer a variety of different experiences and activities designed to enable all members of the school community to participate and grow spiritually.



- A well-planned programme enriches pupils' spiritual development and their sense of being part of a worshipping community.
- Effective use is made of resources, including film clips, music and artefacts. Drama, dance and role play are also used appropriately and more opportunities in this regard could be utilised.
- Parents are invited to join the school for school Masses, recognising that they are an important part of the school community and that prayer and worship are part of all school celebrations. They would welcome more opportunities to attend liturgies and the school is looking for ways to increase these opportunities.
- Acts of collective worship have clear purpose and direction. They explore Gospel teaching, events in the liturgical year, topics in Religious Education and school events. The use of scripture across the school is a strength.
- Staff are making good progress developing the role of pupils in planning and delivering worship and their skills in this important area of school life. This will further enhance the current excellent provision which successfully includes strengthening links between home and school.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding.**

- School leaders have expertise in leading collective worship and are committed to making it a spiritual experience for all present. They model good examples, provide clear expectations, guidance and support for staff in developing their skills.
- They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, feasts and seasons and how these can be made accessible and celebrated by the whole school community.
- The school has made excellent use of Diocesan advisors and an external audit to support Religious Education and act upon recommendations made.
- Staff training is provided with good use being made of links with other Catholic schools. The school is endeavouring to expand these. This increases staff confidence and expertise, provides ideas and shares good practice.
- School leaders and governors consider collective worship and prayer to be a high priority.
- Laleham Lea is an exemplar Catholic school which has been on a successful journey over recent years that has seen it grow and develop into the strong self-confident and forward looking Catholic school it is today.