



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### OUR LADY AND ST. SWITHIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### LIVERPOOL

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Inspection Date 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Mr. John Riley

Unique Reference Number 104632

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

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Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 209

Chair of Governors Mr. J. McCormack

Headteacher Mrs. E. Hartley

School address Parkstile Lane,  
Croxteth,  
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Date of last inspection Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

## Information about this school

- Our Lady and St. Swithin's School is a smaller than average sized Catholic primary school situated in Croxteth in the Liverpool area of the Archdiocese. It serves the parish of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Liverpool.
- There are 209 children on roll of whom 139 are baptised Catholic, 13 come from other Christian denominations and 57 have no religious affiliation. There is one pupil from another faith or religious tradition at the school.
- There are 11 teachers at the school, 7 of whom are baptised Catholic. Eleven teachers teach Religious Education. Three teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further 2 staff currently studying for a Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Since the last inspection, the school was led by an executive headteacher and then an interim headteacher until the current substantive head teacher was appointed.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Our Lady and St. Swithin's is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils appreciate and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They clearly understand the school motto and know how they live it out, both in school and beyond.
- Pupils participate in the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and are part of planning improvements. Pupils have spent time reviewing the mission statement and their motto, *'Love, Live, Learn'* and have reflected on its significance and relevance for them. They also participated in the development of the school's document to promote Gospel and British values within the school and understand how it underpins the school curriculum.
- Pupils show a great respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. They treat each other very kindly and considerately. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are courteous, helpful and well-mannered to other pupils and adults.
- Pupils demonstrate the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong. A Year 6 pupil at interview said, "This is the best school ever, because we love each other." Another remarked, "Being a Catholic school helps us to know more about God and how to treat each other. This will help us when we grow up."
- They accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. As a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school both within school and the wider community. They are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. A Year 2 pupil spoke about how, "...doing things for charity is important because it spreads kindness, so hopefully, everyone can then be nice."
- Throughout the year, children generously fundraise for a number of charities including CAFOD, Nugent, Macmillan Cancer Care and Diabetes UK. They choir sings at local care homes for elderly residents.
- Pupils willingly take on roles and responsibilities around the school and wider community e.g. as school councillors, school chaplaincy team members (Apostles Group), buddies and play leaders. They undertake these roles enthusiastically and gain skills that will serve them well in the future. The Apostles Group, for example, meets weekly to enable them to be pastoral leaders that share good practice and model ideas for hymns and prayers with others.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is evident in their attitudes to their peers. They enjoy completing random acts of kindness and are awarded for doing so.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. A pupil proudly told the inspector that, "We have a therapy group to help people who have difficulties at home or disabilities."

- Pupils have the opportunity to participate actively in residential visits to Crosby Hall and France. Some have also participated in ski trips abroad with the *Liverpool Primary Schools' Ski Association*. These experiences impact greatly on the pupils' social and moral development as they develop a sense of belonging and grow in self-confidence, esteem and independence. Consequently, they understand the value and importance of teamwork and using their communication skills.
- Pupils are proud to receive awards and quick to congratulate each other enthusiastically and joyfully.
- Appropriate to their age and capability, pupils have a very good understanding of loving relationships within the context of a Christian understanding.
- They embrace a holistic approach to education and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. As a result, they respect and are involved with parish and Archdiocesan celebrations and activities.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.
- The school's Mission Statement clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church and shapes all that is happening in Our Lady and St Swithin's. It is central to the life of the school and has recently been reviewed with stakeholders to ensure it is up to date and fully reflective of all that is presently happening in the Catholic Life of the school.
- Staff members are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school. A member of the leadership team wrote, "Our school is a caring community where we put the needs of our pupils first...we work together for the good of all."
- The well-kept learning environment reflects the school's mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. This is especially clear along the 'Values Corridor' which displays the Gospel values that the community has discussed and that the school strongly promotes. These values are mapped out against the school curriculum and floor books are used to gather evidence of their impact and effect on school life.
- The broader curriculum reflects some commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person.
- The school provides many opportunities to enhance the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils. These include residential visits to Kingswood, France and Crosby Hall Educational Trust. The school minibus is well-used to provide trips out for pupils.
- Many afterschool clubs, including sports, art and music, suit the varying interests of children. The parish priest facilitates meditation sessions for pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to have aspiration. The school holds a careers carousel annually for Years 5 and 6 to enable pupils to focus on their ambitions for the future.
- Policies and structures are in place, which indicate that the pastoral care of pupils is given paramount attention and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. A weekly welfare meeting is held to ensure vulnerable pupils and those causing concern are monitored. The new school Nurture Base is well-equipped to deliver therapeutic interventions for groups. The school liaises closely with relevant agencies to ensure that the best quality provision is available for those who need it.
- Pupils with additional needs are invited into school early each morning to undertake activities which are designed to boost their confidence and self-esteem.

- The school has a regard for the well-being and pastoral needs of staff. Members' needs are understood and catered for.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- They demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church and are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by pupils.
- The provision for and development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility. All adults are encouraged and expected to act as role models for pupils to emulate.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which involves monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the school's Catholic Life and Mission Statement. This leads to planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- The behaviour policy is regularly reviewed, is respected by all and contains clear guidelines for what is expected from pupils.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is very effective. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. Staff members are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who traditionally might find working with the school difficult. They are regularly informed about the Catholic Life of the school through the school website, Twitter updates, text messages, meetings etc. Their views and opinions are sought and valued. As a result, parents/carers have an excellent understanding of the school's mission.
- The parish priest is highly effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. Very good home, school and parish links have been forged. The school supports family catechesis and the parish '*With You Always*' sacramental preparation programme.
- As leaders, the governing body is ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are dedicated to the school's mission, are involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. They are kept well-informed and invited to all significant and relevant events.
- The link governor takes a very active interest in developments and makes a substantial contribution to the Catholic Life of the school.
- Parents are invited to a variety of celebrations throughout the year and response is good.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the vision for the Archdiocese throughout the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Pupils, from their limited starting points, make excellent progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners. They work well collaboratively and independently and are keen to share their personal views, feelings and opinions with the wider group.
- Older pupils respond extremely well to questions posed and often show their knowledge and understanding by making links across topics.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their Religious Education lessons especially when teachers provide them with exciting, creative opportunities such as art and drama.
- They concentrate hard; have good understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve. They can clearly articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Behaviour in lessons is excellent because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are extremely unusual. On the day of inspection, pupils across all the age ranges remained focussed and fully on task throughout their lessons.
- Many pupils are familiar with the 'Driver Words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* and use them effectively as an aid to learning.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by formal and teacher assessment, is good. Pupils achieve at least average attainment and this is an improving trend.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- Assessment procedures are in place and teachers plan lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. Planning is differentiated to meet the needs and abilities of each child. Good teaching and learning strategies are deployed to ensure children are engaged. As a result of this, teaching is mainly good and sometimes outstanding.
- Most teachers made good use of the 'Driver Words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* to differentiate tasks to meet children's needs on the day of inspection. It is recommended that this good practice extends to the inclusion of 'Driver Words' in topic planning consistently across the school over time.
- Staff members are developing an understanding of the new draft *Standards of Attainment in Religious Education*.
- Most teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves extremely well and make very good progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate hard in lessons. In some classes, on the day of inspection, excellent use was made of talking partners to enable children to share ideas and deepen their knowledge. This good practice should be shared.
- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to their very excellent and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Teachers manage time effectively to secure learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.

- During lessons, teachers use observation and questioning well in order to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils.
- Good quality resources, including other adults, are used effectively to optimise learning. Teachers plan well to effectively deploy any available additional adults in their classrooms. Together, they work well to enhance learning experiences for children.
- Most teachers communicate high expectations to their pupils concerning work, attitude and behaviour in Religious Education, all of whom respond positively.
- Good oral feedback leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and excellent progress of pupils. Pupils are often given the opportunity to respond to feedback, which further improves their understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Termly moderation of work ensures that teachers' levelling is consistent across the school and as a consequence, they are growing in confidence in assessing work against the new draft *Standards of Attainment in Religious Education*.
- Achievement and effort are often celebrated leading to high levels of motivation from all pupils. Work is often shared on class pages on the school website and on Twitter.
- Displays and working walls in classrooms and around the school celebrate the children's work, reinforce learning and provide opportunities for reflection.

## **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage. Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.
- Leaders and governors strive to ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. Timetables should be rigorously monitored to make sure that the children's entitlement is consistently safeguarded across the school.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- They ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different key stages and phases.
- A cycle of monitoring and evaluation is in place for the subject. Continuing professional development and support are provided as and when required.
- Self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders and governors is an accurate reflection of their frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in strategic action being taken by the school leading to at least very good outcomes in Religious Education. Progress towards targets set is monitored effectively by the subject leader and shared with senior leaders and governors.
- The subject leader moderates formally assessed work internally with staff members to maintain consistency and reliability. It is then externally moderated with the school's cluster group members to ensure it is in line with other providers. Pupils' progress is tracked and data generated is shared with senior leaders and governors.

- The enthusiastic curriculum leader for Religious Education is passionate about the subject. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. These are used very effectively to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching which is generally very good. She is a member of the senior leadership team and her support is much appreciated by colleagues including new members of staff and those on supply.
- She communicates regularly with the link governor who offers critical support and challenge to drive forward improvements. He is a regular and popular visitor to the school.
- Governors undertake learning walks and have an open invitation to visit classes.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They act with great reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. Pupils are engaged, responsive and reflective. They sing and sign joyfully and reflect purposefully in silence.
- Pupils take pride in contributing to, planning and leading Collective Worship in an age appropriate manner. They do so capably, confidently and enthusiastically. They particularly enjoy leading special celebrations for the whole school and for parents and carers.
- They are keen to participate in class and whole school Collective Worship in a variety of ways.
- Pupils use different approaches to prayer which include scripture, meditation, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary.
- They have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approach this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities. They clearly understand the liturgical structure used.
- The experience of living and working in a worshipping community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of their ability or background. They display utmost reverence and respect demonstrating deepening spiritual and moral understanding especially at times given for personal reflection.
- At interview, pupils talked very positively and confidently about their experiences of Collective Worship. A Year 2 pupil told an inspector, "When we do Collective Worship together, it makes me happy. It is really peaceful."

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Praying together is a part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. Timings, content and delivery are appropriate for the age and development of pupils.
- The themes chosen for worship reflect an excellent understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of Collective Worship is engaging, and members of the community speak positively about these opportunities.

- Relevant staff have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have opportunities to celebrate these times e.g. their participation in the annual May procession.
- Staff are confident in leading worship and are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver worship when appropriate. They have a good understanding of the nature and purpose of Collective Worship and of a variety of methods and styles of prayer. It is important that communal prayer is consistently included in Collective Worship and not just silent prayer.
- Suitable, quality resources have been provided. A variety of devotional areas around the school, including the new prayer space and the outdoor prayer garden, offer opportunities for prayer and quiet contemplation.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is growing.
- School Masses are celebrated in the local parish church and in school.
- Worship is sensitive to and fully inclusive of all children as there is always an invitation for those present to take part.

### **How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Leaders provide policies and guidelines, ratified by the governors, to enable staff members to plan and deliver excellent Collective Worship. It is timetabled to ensure quality time is devoted to worship and timings are suitable for the age and stage of the pupils. It is recommended that the policy be reviewed to fully reflect current practice in school.
- An annual review of Collective Worship provision is undertaken by the co-ordinator. This includes an audit of resources and pupil interviews. Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes. Planning and practice is monitored as part of the annual cycle, to ensure provision and experience is of a high quality. Feedback and support are provided as necessary.
- The Collective Worship co-ordinator provides opportunities for induction of new teachers and models outstanding practice for all to emulate. It is recommended that the headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school, also leads whole school worship.
- Regular continuing professional development is provided as necessary to ensure staff members are fully equipped to deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders promote pupils' planning and leading of Collective Worship.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers, governors and parishioners to attend Collective Worship particularly at significant times during the year.

## What the school needs to do to improve further

- Improve self-evaluation by:
  - clearly identifying the outcomes for pupils and impact of the school's provision in Catholic life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
  - embedding *Journey In Love* into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education;
  - promoting Catholic Social Teaching by providing pupils with further opportunities across the curriculum to care for our common home etc.
- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
  - encouraging pupils to improve the presentation of their work;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to be creative in their Religious Education lessons;
  - promoting the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies to further develop subject knowledge of staff.
- Further develop Collective Worship by:
  - reviewing the current Collective Worship policy to fully reflect current practice;
  - ensuring consistency in planning.
- Continue to address the areas identified in the Self Evaluation Document.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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## CATHOLIC LIFE

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	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***