

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 Star of the Sea is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Seaforth and serving the parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea.
- There are 154 children on roll of whom 67 are baptised Catholic, 9 come from other Christian denominations, and 78 who have no religious affiliation.
- There are 11 teachers of whom 8 teach Religious Education. Six teachers are Catholic. Two teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further 5 currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Since the last inspection there has been a significant turnover of staff. A new headteacher has been appointed and a new Religious Education subject leadership team has recently been developed.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Overall effectiveness:

Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School is good in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.

- Pupils are outstanding in the way in which they contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life at Our Lady Star of the Sea.
- There is a shared vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community and reinforced in the current school Mission Statement whereby “...We pray together, learn together, love and value each other.” During the inspection this was actively being reviewed.
- Pupils have an outstanding sense of belonging to the school and live out their Mission Statement. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members of this most inclusive school community.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility from their earliest years by becoming school councillors, peer mentors and lunchtime play leaders.
- In the wider community pupils act as ambassadors of the school during off site visits i.e. visiting church, singing in the local nursing home and visiting the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ The King.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities e.g. CAFOD, BBC Children in Need, Macmillan Cancer Support, and Alzheimers Society Dementia Project to name but a few and outreach to the local and wider community through the Waterloo Partnership Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone.
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential outdoor activities. Years 2 and 3 pupils have an opportunity to visit Crosby Hall Education Trust and Years 4 and 5 pupils visit Kingswood Activity Centre, Colomendy. Year 6 visit both Llandudno and London.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of right and wrong. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and SEAL is used to very good effect.
- The school supports children and their families both in school and pastorally. This helps to foster and build on good community relationships.
- Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other’s achievements at their weekly ‘SEAL stars’ and awards assemblies.
- They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences through participation in liturgical events in school, on retreat days and in the parish.
- Pupil voice is used to good effect across the school and their opinions are valued. They are reflective and enquiring.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local Faith and religious communities by taking part in parish liturgies and choral events, the immediate neighbourhood served by the school though support of the parish in collecting food for the Harvest Festival and outreach in the wider community through fundraising for numerous causes.
- The school operates a breakfast club which is a great asset for the community and is well attended.

How well pupils' achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment in Religious Education is good.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- The school has embraced the *Come and See* programme and the needs of all the pupils are being met. The range of activities provided for the pupils are effective in engaging pupils from their earliest years.
- Pupils in Foundation Stage show an increasing confidence in their ability to work independently. The good work begun in the Nursery ensures that standards are rising in Reception.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. They make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good and their support is effective.
- Assessments undertaken to date and scrutiny of workbooks provides evidence of pupils generally attaining a good level for their age and stage of development. Further opportunities to moderate pupils work will enable more accurate results especially with the higher levels.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity.
- Pupils have established routines and are quickly settled into the work that they have been set.
- They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest and excellent behaviour. This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils work extremely well independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in Collective Worship.
- Pupils act with reverence, are reflective and keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- The school is sensitive to the needs of all those present throughout Collective Worship and pupils act with integrity when praying together.
- Pupils are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles and their knowledge of liturgy is increasing.
- All pupils from their earliest years are regularly involved in planning, preparing and leading Worship.
- Devotional areas around school are well maintained. The hall boasts a prayer tree and a mission wall which pupils were keen to point out and talk about. Each classroom has its own focus area which enriches pupils' sensory experiences.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is outstanding in ensuring that pupils are interested, engaged and in most classes make good progress.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. On the day of inspection there was some outstanding practice observed. In those classes teachers had very high expectations. In most lessons a range of differentiated activities were set, pupils were challenged and pace was excellent.
- The support of the parish priest, interviewed about his vocation in one lesson and overseeing a role play of a 'Rite of Marriage' in another, brought another dimension to pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding which enriched their enjoyment of Religious Education enormously.
- Good use is made of time and resources e.g. interactive white board, God's and Church's Story books, audio and visual media, iPads etc.
- More explicit use of the *Come and See* website during lessons will enhance pupils' experiences of Religious Education.
- On the day of inspection iPads were being used by some of the pupils to enhance their learning.
- In the best lessons teachers effectively deploy teaching assistants for those children who require additional support.
- Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons.
- Evidence in books shows quality marking which informs pupils of their progress, poses questions and informs them of their next steps.
- Effort and achievement are celebrated throughout the school.
- The school has implemented assessment strategies which provide information on the achievement of all pupils and tracking for this year is in place however this is in its infancy and there is not enough data gathered from the last inspection to show the impact of teaching and trends over time.
- The school has begun to moderate pieces of assessed work and to build up a portfolio of levelled exemplars. This will further support teacher's accuracy when undertaking this process.
- Joining a cluster group with other Catholic schools in the locality will support the new subject leadership team in the assessment process.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The Religious Education curriculum is good in promoting pupils' learning.
- The school using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.
- Teachers' planning for Religious Education is good and the school is using the Archdiocesan proformas.
- Driver words are used routinely in lessons to raise achievement and are explicit in teachers planning and in their repertoire when delivering lessons. In the best lessons the driver words are used in the plenary sessions to reinforce learning outcomes.
- Termly newsletters and the Wednesday Word are provided for parents and carers. Further information pertaining to Religious Education is also available through the school website.
- Enrichment activities such as guitar, football, brass band etc. have a positive impact on the wider curriculum.

- Pupils have explored the beliefs and values of another faith - Judaism and another Religion – Islam. A practising Jew and a teacher from the local high school came in to support this aspect of the curriculum. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently from themselves.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The Collective Worship provided is outstanding in reflecting the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of Faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the Spiritual needs of the staff and pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Pupils are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers and the local Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the *Come and See* programme.
- The school hosts 'Little Stars' a mother and baby group once a week in the hall.
- The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and is fulsome in his praise of the work of the children, staff and governors. He presides at celebrations of Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year both weekly in school and in church. This new initiative is greatly enhancing the home, school and parish community link.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and are deeply committed to the Church's Mission in education. This is reflected in the current Mission Statement outlining Our Lady Star of the Sea as a place where 'We pray together, learn together, love and value each other.'
- All those who form part of the school community are currently involved in the development of a new Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives will direct and guide all aspects of school life and will become a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through prayer, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need.
- The Self Evaluation Document is comprehensive and since the last inspection the school has continued to build on and further develop the areas identified as key priorities specifically Collective Worship and tracking performance.
- The school provides very good newly and recently qualified teacher induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it.
- A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for all staff, governors and pupils including retreats led by the parish priest, Collective Worship and 'Rejoice' celebrations at the end of each topic.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.

- There are positive relationships at every level leading to a welcoming and caring learning environment for governors, staff, pupils and their families.
- Governors are well informed and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. Foundation governors are proactive members of the parish community in which the school is situated. They are committed wholeheartedly to the Catholic life of the school and are actively involved in its monitoring and evaluation processes in this area.
- The school supports the parish *With You Always* family catechesis sessions.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Religious Education.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance and tracking is in place however this data is not currently being shared with governors. As the core subject governors need to become more rigorous in monitoring outcomes for pupils in Religious Education.
- Following reconstitution it is highly recommended that all the governors undertake training with respect to being a foundation governor in a Catholic school and Religious Education.
- The school has recently appointed a new link governor with responsibility for Religious Education. This is a pivotal role in both supporting and reporting on the strategic actions taken by the senior leadership team to bring about improvements to outcomes and provision.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all staff including attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days and subject leader days. The school has undertaken a commitment to support 5 staff through the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Since the last inspection a new subject leadership team has been developed. A senior leader with a focus on Mission and Ethos is supporting a recently qualified teacher with Religious Education and Assessment. They are working well together and the school has all the key documentation in place to continue to drive the school forward. They are both committed to making improvements to outcomes and provision and are using the Archdiocesan monitoring materials to ensure that all procedures pertaining to planning, evaluating and assessment are followed through.
- The Self Evaluation Document encapsulates accurately the position of the school at this time.

What does the school needs to do to improve further?

- Further develop the work currently being undertaken in assessment, monitoring and tracking of pupils progress by:
 - undertaking Archdiocesan In-service training with respect to becoming a foundation governor in a Catholic school and Religious Education;
 - adding Religious Education as an agenda item to all Full Governing Body and Ethos and Curriculum meetings;
 - continuing to build up a portfolio of assessed pieces of work to aid accuracy when levelling work in Religious Education.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate