



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### WARRINGTON

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Inspection Date                      Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Inspectors                              Mrs Julie Rourke   Rev. Fr. Anthony Kelly

Unique Reference Number    111308

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                      204

Chair of Governors                Mr Phil Atkinson

Headteacher                         Mr Liam Anderson

School address                      St Benedict's Catholic Primary School  
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Warrington  
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Date of last inspection            24<sup>th</sup> June 2014

# 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

- St. Benedict's school is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Warrington, Cheshire and serves the parish of Blessed James Bell.
- There are 204 children on roll of whom 189 are baptised Catholic, 8 children come from other Christian denominations and 5 are from other faith or religious traditions. Two children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 10 teachers at the school, including the headteacher, of whom 5 are baptised Catholic. Five teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection, the governors have appointed a new headteacher. There is a new subject leader for Religious Education.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Benedict's Catholic Primary School 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 at St. Benedict's know and understand their mission, '*In the light of Jesus, we learn to shine.*' and know how to live it out. They actively participate in the Catholic Life and promote the mission of the school. They regularly evaluate its effectiveness.
- The mission is regularly celebrated through *Golden Table, Lunchtime Stars, Golden cushions*, mission awards and I shine tickets.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. Children are polite and courteous; their behaviour is exemplary. In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate and celebrate each other's achievements.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school, its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. Children attend masses in the parish and in school. In partnership with the parish children raised funds for a refugee family's home. The parish priest expressed on the day of inspection, 'Children at St. Benedict's live and breathe the Catholic faith, they know it and celebrate it.'
- Pupils and their families are welcomed in the parish run Sacramental preparation programme, *With You Always*.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of a Catholic school entails. As a result, they take a leading role in those activities which promote the school's Catholic Life and mission, for example, becoming part of the School Council, Playground Leaders and as prefects. They enjoy a variety of extra-curricular groups, such as, first aid, Gaelic football, art and film. Older children experience residential trips and outdoor pursuits.
- Children take part in a vast amount of activities, living out their mission with their community. They enjoy their involvement in school fayres, performances in church, healthy week and park runs.
- The school choir often performs for the local and wider community such as: Ryfields retirement home, St. Elphin's, St. Benedict's social club and perform at *Manchester's Young Voices* event.
- Pupils understand what it means to have a vocation and joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others. Children actively seek ways to fundraise for many national charities but also know the needs of their own community. They support for example, CAFOD, Nugent, Colours of Peace, Little Princess Trust, their local foodbank and Warrington Open Door.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and religions. They are encouraged to promote acceptance and tolerance within their school community. They have had a visitor from a local mosque when studying Islam. The school is outstanding in ensuring children are developing their alertness to express their religious and cultural identity and beliefs and celebrate world values.

- They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. There is a team of staff dedicated to children's well-being. There is regular social, emotional and relationship support in talk groups, circle time, nurture groups, small groups and one to one.
- The Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love*, recommended by the Archdiocese, has been implemented. As a result of this, pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have an understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding.

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

- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- The school Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The school is a bright, inviting and colourful environment which reflects its mission throughout. The world view display celebrates the commitment the school has to culture and diversity. There are dedicated prayer spaces throughout the school. An aesthetically pleasing hall with coloured glass and Stations of the Cross is an inviting environment for worship. Classroom displays reflect the worth given to children's work and are used well.
- St. Benedict's has a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer. The school is a supportive and joyful community. A staff member expressed, 'Our ethos is special and permeates all elements of school life. I am proud to be part of the St. Benedict's family and very grateful that this is where I get to work every day.'
- The school has a high regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for. The staff have many opportunities to develop their spirituality through for example, *Come and See for yourself* prior to topics being taught. The school has dedicated Catholic Life training with their local cluster of Catholic primaries. There are well-being days for staff to be involved in activities such as, yoga, healthy living and fun runs. The staff and pupils take part with local schools in the yearly and traditional *Warrington Walking Day*.
- St. Benedict's has good links with their local high schools, St Gregory's Catholic High and Cardinal Newman. Together they have enhanced anti-bullying by sharing ideas and making positive footprints. The school has successfully been awarded a silver 'Wise Up' award for their progress in tackling bullying and hate crime. Secondary school staff have enhanced children's learning and prayer life with for example, Islamic Art and joined children in their Rejoice Assemblies.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are outstanding role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. There is a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, caring for their common home and the dignity of every human person. The school is keen to keep developing their commitments by introducing for example, CAFOD's Live Simply award.
- The school provides many opportunities for children to develop their Personal, Social and Health Education. This is linked closely to the Relationships and Sex Education programme, *Journey in Love* which reflects Catholic teachings and principles. The school can now continue to embed the RSE programme across the whole of the school year and evaluate the evidence and practices.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide pastoral care to pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.

- The school provides parents with a wealth of information regarding the Catholic Life of the school. The website and school's *Twitter* feeds express the variety of opportunities provided for the children and its successes and celebrations. Parents have opportunity to take part in Knowledge Fairs, working alongside their children. They are invited to regular Rejoice assemblies and Collective Worship throughout the year. Parent questionnaires overwhelmingly support and agree with the school's Catholic ethos and values.

## **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.
- The school's Mission Statement is regularly reviewed with all stakeholders. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are role models of Catholic leadership. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which reflects rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge and is clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. This leads to well-targeted and planned improvements.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs frequently and is well planned and effective. As a result, the staff have an outstanding understanding of the school's mission. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the obvious benefit of pupils. Parents/carers understand the school's mission. They are invited to school Masses, services, Sacramental preparation, and a variety of fundraising and school events.
- The parish priest is exemplary in his support to St. Benedict's. He is also a member of the governing body and meets regularly with the headteacher regarding the Catholic Life of the school.
- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it consistently emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority.
- Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about the school's mission, are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary.
- The governors celebrate regularly with the school through, for example, in their role as class governors, through worship, fundraising events and assemblies.
- All policies relating to the Catholic life of the school are up to date and ratified by the governors.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives. Each initiative is well planned and is effective, ensuring the children and the whole school community are part of the Church's mission.

## **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 varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Almost all pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills effectively, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically.
- Children would now enjoy developing their understanding by exploring the demands of religious commitment in everyday life with for example extending their support of others in focused groups such as, *Faith in Action*, *Mini Vinnies*, becoming a *Fairtrade* school, or similar groups that would enable them to develop using their faith to seek justice for others.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate exceptionally well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and of what they need to do to improve, and can articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy tackling challenging activities and respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning. The school is keen to keep developing differentiated challenging activities through use of the driver words.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education. They are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding. Their work is presented to a high standard, depict a variety of activities and progress is evident across the year groups.
- Pupils workbooks celebrate their achievements. There is evidence of developmental marking. This enables pupils to benefit from challenges, know how well they are progressing and know how to keep improving.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage evidence reflects and celebrates the rich experiences and opportunities they are given. They are presented to a high standard and progress is clearly evidenced.
- The school has introduced the new standards of attainment for Religious Education. Gathering of evidence is highly organised and monitored exceptionally well. There is outstanding evidence of data collated from across the school, showing how Religious Education is affecting different groups of children, for example, boys and girls.
- The collation of data for individual children and in specific groupings shows how the school is beginning to use this information to ensure that every child is planned for. The school is now keen to use this data to inform differentiation, teaching and learning. This will support their sustained progress.

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

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence and understanding of the breadth of teaching methods. Pupils are inspired to learn and make outstanding and sustained progress.
- Teachers are effective in consistently planning high-quality lessons linked to their knowledge of the individual, consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. As a result of this, the majority of teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers plan for and use driver words well. They are keen to develop ways to improve their planning by using data to inform their learning objectives to suit the varying learning needs of the children. By choosing one activity, teachers can differentiate and challenge children to improve in their skills.

- Teachers plan a wealth of creative activities to engage the pupils. Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teacher's assessment strategy, securing high levels of motivation from pupils.
- They have excellent relationships with the children. They give praise and encouragement to succeed and skilfully question during lessons. On the day of inspection, teachers made great use of key religious vocabulary, big questions to consider, communicated high expectations and gave challenging plenaries.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- In an outstanding lesson on the day of inspection, excellent use was made of a working wall to remind Early Years children of their prior learning. They were engrossed in a variety of practical activities. Outstanding teaching assistants enabled the children to fully understand how we live by Jesus' rule and adapted children's learning quickly to respond to their needs.
- In another lesson, a clear learning objective was shared using the driver words. The teacher listened to answers and responded with challenging questions. This enabled the children to rapidly progress and were making links to Scripture they had studied previously.
- Teaching assistants throughout the school provide outstanding understanding and consideration of the specific needs of pupils in their care and encourage progress. They are used effectively to optimise learning for pupils.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding 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.
- They ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented.
- Leaders and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which leads to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- Governors are fully informed about Religious Education standards and the subject leader regularly reports to governors. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and ratify all policies linked to Religious Education.
- The Religious Education governors meet regularly with the subject leader and are informed of the impact of standards across the school and any new initiatives. They have been involved in book monitoring and are familiar with the standard of work in Religious Education. Governors are keen to share what they have monitored with the children and apply a governor stamp to give praise and acknowledgement.
- The Parish priest is a keen supporter of the *Come and See* Religious Education Programme. He has taken time to familiarise himself with the themes and this is reflected in his discussions and liturgies with the children. He is always available to offer support for children and teachers.

- The curriculum leader for Religious Education has worked tirelessly to develop and continually improve the provision and outcomes of Religious Education. She leads a highly supportive team, who are dedicated and enjoy their role because they understand and know the importance of the Catholic church's mission in education. A member of the Religious Education team shared, 'We are lucky to have such an excellent RE team, who work tirelessly to guide, help and support our school community.'
- The subject leader for Religious Education is a role model of outstanding practice. She seeks out ways to continually improve, keep outstanding progress and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. This impacts effectively on teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in outstanding teaching. She works closely with a highly effective cluster group of local Catholic schools.
- Parents receive regular updates and newsletters about Religious Education, formal reports on the achievement of their children and there is a wealth of information on the schools' website and Twitter.

## **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 good.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils regularly prepare and take part in worship with enthusiasm and they are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy. Other pupils are engaged by the worship opportunities planned by their peers.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer both traditional and contemporary. Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.
- On the day of inspection, children gathered in appropriate, suitable environments ready for prayer. Collective worship was well planned, and pupils were fully involved appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- In one worship observed, children gathered reverently to calming music. Age and stage appropriate Scripture was shared. The children were given time to reflect with images and music. The 'go forth' message was clear and enabled the children to spread the message that they had heard with family at home. It was an enriching experience for the children and adults present.
- Children now need further experiences when they are responding to God's work. By taking away the need for questioning the children will become used to heartfelt responses and have more time to be guided in talking to God in silent prayer.
- There are many opportunities throughout the school year for pupils to develop their understanding of the Church's liturgical year and its seasons and feasts.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, irrespective of ability.

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

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Church's mission in education.
- Collective Worship is given the high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing. As a result, experiences of Collective Worship are cherished by every member of the community.
- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and are keen to ensure pupils have quality experiences of the Church's liturgical year.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver worship, when appropriate. They have a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and use a variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- *St. Benedict's* takes every opportunity to attract and facilitate attendance by parents/carers associated with the pupils and response to this invitation is outstanding. The school provides prayer bags for home and the school's *Twitter* account ensures that liturgies, worships and celebrations are consistently shared with parents and carers.
- The outstanding partnership with the parish and the parish priest is a strength of the school. The parish priest ensures he plans liturgies that are appropriate for the children. He understands where the children are in their faith journey and takes time to build upon this.

## **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 know how to provide clear policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. They lead Collective Worship within the school and are role models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship.
- They have an outstanding understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they are able to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context. The parish priest fully supports, provides and celebrates a variety of liturgical events with the school community.
- Monitoring of Collective Worship is embedded and is supporting worship across the school.
- There are portfolios that provide ongoing evidence of Collective Worship across the school. Moving forward it will be beneficial to gather monitored planning of Worship and quality pieces for the portfolio, as there is already a wealth of evidence available on the website and through the school's *Twitter* account.
- Governors are informed of policy guidelines and monitoring of Collective Worship. They also are invited to and regularly attend Collective Worship celebrations.

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

- Continue to follow targets outlined in the Self Evaluation Document and the recommendations outlined within this report.

## 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	1
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	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
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***