



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

## HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### ST.HELENS

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Inspection Date	4 <sup>th</sup> October 2011
Inspectors	Mrs Denise Hegarty, Mrs Anne McNally
Unique Reference Number	132188
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005	

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3-11
Number on roll	217
Chair of Governors	Mr Trevor Critchley
Head teacher	Mrs Kate Barlow
School address	Brunswick Street, Parr St Helens WA9 2JE
Telephone number	01744678670
E-mail address	holyspirit@sthelens.org.uk
Date of last inspection	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2008

# Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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 the school

Holy Spirit School is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Parr, St Helens serving the parish of St Vincent de Paul and St Anne and Blessed Dominic. Excluding the 26 pupils in nursery, there are 191 children on roll of whom 142 are baptised Catholic, 14 come from other Christian denominations, and 6 from other faith or religious traditions. Twenty nine pupils have no specified religious affiliation. There are 10 teachers at the school, 9 who teach Religious Education and 7 of them are Catholic. Six teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Since the last inspection the school has experienced significant change in staffing, including the appointments of a new headteacher and subject co-ordinator. There has also been an extensive programme put in place to refurbish the building and enhance provision.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

# Inspection Judgements

**Overall effectiveness:  
How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

## **Main Findings:-**

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School provides good Catholic Education. Gospel values underpin the life and work of the school. There is a clear vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community. Leaders strive to achieve quality Religious Education for all pupils. The subject is effectively monitored and evaluated. There are high aspirations for the Catholic life of the school as shown through the Mission Statement and the 'Core Values' held. The Governors play an active role in promoting and supporting the school's rigorous self evaluation and subsequent action plans. Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils and staff know, own and live out their motto, 'Live, Love, Learn'. There is no significant difference in performance between groups of pupils. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also good and show an improving trend as the monitoring of assessment and tracking becoming more developed. The school is successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. The leadership team is highly motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to secure improvement. Staff are affirmed and supported. Teachers are provided with in-service for their continuing professional development in the subject. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Any underperformance is challenged.

Overall the school has good capacity for sustained improvement and there is a strong commitment to rapid improvement. A sensitive approach to change has ensured commitment from staff, pupils, parents and governors. Staff members are working tirelessly to ensure that action plans are completed within given timescales and there is now a firm foundation on which to build.

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

- Develop a consistent understanding of assessment procedures through;
  - training and the regular moderation of work;
  - then, in conjunction with RE link Governor, developing tracking procedures to monitor progress and achievement across the school in Religious Education.
- Ensure driver words from the levels of attainment are used effectively for consistent differentiation by;
  - continuing to monitor this in planning.

- Develop the planning and delivery of Collective Worship, by:
  - observing good practice and through in-service to ensure the children's liturgical formation is developing appropriately;
- Continue to implement other targets set out in the school's Self-Evaluation Document. That includes:
  - ensuring appropriate differentiation related to level of ability in Religious Education rather than literacy;
  - continuing to develop the school portfolio of assessed and levelled work;
  - developing a prayer trail in the school grounds for children and staff to use for meditation and prayer.

## **How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils**

Pupils' achievements in Religious Education are good. On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Their attainment in Religious Education is good as is their progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining at an appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also good. Pupils are becoming increasingly more literate in Religious Education as they become familiar with the key words from the topics they study. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age and capacity.

Children are developing the skills that enable them to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Presentation of work has a high priority in the school and children's work shows care and attention to detail. Any underachievement is challenged and pupils are developing strategies for self assessment. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and outstanding behaviour during lessons.

Pupils are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school. The children are actively encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the wider community such as in the 'Angels and Starfish' project (a charity for orphaned children in South Africa). Many other involvements include CAFOD, 'Operation Christmas Child', and support for Willowbrook Hospice. Pupils have a good sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school, such as taking part in the Buddy system and the School Council. Pupils benefit greatly from participation in away days and retreat activities. They are considerate and caring of others both in school and the wider community. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and they take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. They praise and

acknowledge the contribution of others and show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.

Pupils respond to and participate very well in Collective Worship. They are at an early stage of preparing for worship, and should be given more opportunities to plan for their prayer experiences, for example by choosing suitable hymns and readings appropriate to their age and stage of learning. Leaders have plans in place to gather children's ideas for a school prayer. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. They reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and confidently. No-one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show mutual respect. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing, with some variety of prayer styles in evidence. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.

<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils</b>	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education</li> </ul>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

## **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

The quality of teaching is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested, engaged and make good progress. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and are striving to develop differentiated tasks that allow each child to achieve and make progress. Findings of formal assessments are used by most teachers to inform their planning. The 'driver words' from the levels of attainment are used effectively to ensure that work is pitched at the appropriate level. Work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of time and resources e.g. Teaching Assistants were deployed effectively to support children with special and/or additional needs, groups and individual pupils. Although very good use of Information and Communication Technology was observed in some classes, other opportunities were missed that would have provided younger children with a more visual learning experience. Teachers and others use a variety of strategies to engage and inspire pupils e.g. creativity through kinaesthetic activities are used in all key stages. Children are motivated to remain on task with regular praise and rewards and respond positively by showing good attitude to work and excellent behaviour. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss their work and progress.

At the present time, the assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is satisfactory with some good features. The school has satisfactory assessment strategies which provide secure and consistent information on

the achievement of pupils. Formal assessment tasks are now undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving through termly formal assessments. They are beginning to enable pupils to evaluate and assess their own work. It is recommended that this good practice is further developed along with the use of developmental marking to indicate the next steps for pupils to take in their learning. Assessment information is recorded and groupings of pupils are subsequently made. Leaders now plan to collate results and to begin to track achievement. Findings can then be shared with Governors, staff and parents to give accurate information on attainment and also used to identify and target the lower and higher attainers.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and is very inclusive of all learners. The school, using the '*Here I Am*' programme recommended by the Archdiocese, meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' of England and Wales. Planning indicates there is a full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are regularly consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. The study of Judaism is embedded in the curriculum and enhanced by visits to a synagogue and by visits from members of the Jewish faith. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. Enrichment activities such as a variety of after school clubs, a breakfast club and residential holidays all have a positive impact on the curriculum. The Religious Education curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The Collective Worship provided reflects the Catholic character of the school in a satisfactory manner. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. Children are enabled to pray formally and informally and staff and pupils pray together. Staff members are good role models for the children to emulate. They plan well for Collective Worship and are aware that it plays a key role in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. A wealth of good quality resources are used effectively to enhance devotional areas. More resources have been purchased in readiness for the pupils to develop their skills in planning and leading Collective Worship. The subject leader has lead by example and shared her good practise in this area with other staff members. Further in-service should be provided to ensure all teachers are aware of how children's liturgical development is enhanced through Collective Worship and of the importance of reflection and contemplation. Weekly Rosary reflections led by parishioners are provided for Key Stage 2 pupils. The school has been very proactive in warmly inviting and encouraging parents and the local community to attend whole school Collective Worship at a variety of celebrations of the '*Here I Am*' programme and the Church's liturgical year. This has been very successful and attendance has dramatically improved thus strengthening links between school and home. The parish deacon is a

frequent, welcome visitor and shows a great affinity with the school and surrounding community. He attends services and assemblies, works with the classes and facilitates links with the parish. The Headteacher makes good use of 'Before You Begin' sessions thus giving members of staff the opportunity to develop their own spirituality.

<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic Education</b>	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	3

### **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the schools**

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show an outstanding understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the School's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community including parents, parish clergy, governors and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness. The school has developed a set of Core Values that are displayed throughout the building. The children know their mission is to 'Live, Love and Learn' and are very aware of how to use their core values to achieve this mission. Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school.

The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Running alongside this are rigorous action plans for Religious Education and Collective Worship. Analysis from these documents provides a basis to celebrate the school's strengths and outlines areas found for development. The quality and accuracy of the documents are very clear and have great impact in developing the Catholic life of the school. The school provides very good induction and in-service training to enable staff members to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and to play their unique part in it. Members of staff attend Archdiocesan training on a rolling programme. A range of opportunities for spiritual and moral development are provided for staff and pupils such as 'Before You Begin' sessions with the Headteacher, in-service sessions for Vision and Values and the Mission Statement review. These enable staff and pupils to secure firm foundations for Catholic life.

Leaders and managers use the monitoring data they have available well to evaluate the school's performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. They have identified the need for a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation process to improve standards and have introduced an appropriate timetable for the year. The dedicated subject leader guides and leads Religious

Education outstandingly. Along with the headteacher, she has worked tirelessly to ensure a high profile is given to the subject and its status is maintained. She shows commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. Good documentation directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.

Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through e.g. ensuring there is a suitable budget that is commensurate with other core subjects. They are aware of standards in the school, monitor the action plans and review updated policies. A named Religious Education link Governor is working closely alongside the subject leader to plan for improvements.

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school. There are positive relationships at every level. Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school e.g. through a behaviour working party, by attending celebration assemblies and in family learning activities. There are close working partnerships with the parish for Sacramental preparation. The use of the *'Here I am'* programme promotes community cohesion well. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions including Judaism. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. There is a very good awareness of environmental issues where children are actively involved in eco-groups and recycling. The school participates in activities to support and raise awareness of people on the margins of society and those who suffer, for example, through Dawn Patrol, Operation Christmas Child and the Angels and Starfish project.

Holy Spirit is a truly Catholic school community where everyone is made welcome and feels a sense of belonging. It is a rapidly improving school that is fulfilling its Mission Statement in 'soaring to new heights'.

<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How well leaders 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 and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	2