



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARIE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

STANDISH

Inspection Date 8TH October 2019

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Mrs. Angela Williams

Unique Reference Number 106493

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4 - 11

Number on roll 199

Chair of Governors Mrs. F. Cheetham

Headteacher Mrs. M. Smith

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Date of last inspection 1st October 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 Team and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Information about this school

- St Marie's school is an average sized Catholic primary school situated in Standish in the Wigan area of the Archdiocese and serves the parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation and St Bernadette's (formerly the parish of St. Marie's, Standish).
- There are 199 children on roll of whom 169 are baptised Catholic, 15 come from other Christian denominations and 12 have no religious affiliation. There are 3 pupils from another faith or religious tradition at the school.
- There are 9 teachers at the school, 7 of whom are baptised Catholic. Eight teachers teach Religious Education. Seven teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and 1 other is currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher. A new Religious Education Co-ordinator has been leading the subject since 2018.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Marie's school is outstanding 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.
- Pupils throughout the school are actively engaged in the creation and evaluation of the core values that underpin the Mission Statement and the work of the school. They are part of planning improvements to it and understand that it calls them to live and work together in following the example of Jesus.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. A CAFOD Ambassador on one regular visit to the school wrote, "This is an outstanding Catholic school. The children here are confident; they are always polite and well behaved and clearly love being in school. The atmosphere is excellent. Poor behaviour has never, ever been a problem. Behaviour has always been outstanding."
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace and willingly 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. During the school's Spirituality Day, the children were split into family groups and each child enthusiastically participated in the creation of a Peace Garden by planting, creating artwork and writing prayers. The science and eco group try to reduce the school's carbon footprint and act as stewards of creation by recycling paper, saving electricity, tending to the school garden etc. They have been instrumental in the school being awarded the Green Flag and the Primary Science Quality Mark.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. Year Five pupils have created a blog to share what they have learned about stewardship of the earth as outlined in the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si*. Following the success of last year's pilot group, the current Year Six pupils are undertaking the *Faith in Action* Pin Level Award which encourages young people to discover how to live out their faith through service and reflection.
- Pupils appreciate the efforts of the Young Disciples whose responsibilities range from taking care of others on the playground to visiting vulnerable adults in the community. These pupils from Years Five and Six also prepare and lead worship each Friday before the school's celebration assembly.
- Pupils willingly and enthusiastically participate in opportunities provided by the school, such as visits and retreats. Year Six pupils take part in an empowerment retreat as part of the transition to the next stage of their learning. Year Four pupils undergo retreat days as part of their sacramental preparation.

- Pupils respond very well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Each year, pupils in Year Six have a residential trip to the Lake District to develop resilience and independence. They appreciate the awe and wonder of the scenery around them.
- Many pupils take full advantage of the wrap around care and the many extracurricular opportunities the school and outside agencies provide for them including debating, art, sports, drama and music ministry.
- They are encouraged to undertake roles and responsibilities in the school and embrace the demands that this entails. As democratically elected house captains, school councillors, play leaders, welcome ambassadors etc. pupils gain experiences that will serve them very well in the future.
- Within their comprehensive Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum (which includes Relationships and Sex Education), pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a very good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding.
- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, understand what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. The school choir, for example, eagerly sing at liturgical services and many community events.
- Children in school, notably encouraged by the school's house captains, have organised coffee mornings to raise funds for their chosen charities which include Macmillan Cancer Care, Genes for Jeans, Wigan and Leigh Deaf Children's Society etc. They have collected gifts for The Brick project to make a difference to the lives of those affected by poverty or homelessness.
- 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 diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. They have been involved in considering and responding to SYNOD 2020 questions.
- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.

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, 'Living as Jesus taught us and as part of God's family, we at St Marie's seek to develop each individual with faith, love and respect for each other', clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church and places Christ and his teachings at the heart of school life.
- Staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They are outstanding role models and demonstrate a high level of respect for, care of and service to the whole community. They participate fully in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school such as retreats, staff prayer, Continuous Professional Development on Catholic Life etc.
- St Marie's is a fully inclusive, welcoming school and there is a strong sense of belonging at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships, the support and encouragement given, the capacity to celebrate all achievements and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- Visitors regularly comment on the warm, friendly, helpful welcome they receive upon entering the school.

- The whole school environment reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. The entrance hall has a display related to the church's liturgical year or the current Collective Worship theme. The school hall has a variety of inspirational displays and the school library has a peaceful area for prayer and reflection. Every other area of the school proudly displays and celebrates pupils' work. Classrooms have up-to-date Religious Education displays, Collective Worship areas and reflections designed to affirm, support and motivate.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are good role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. When asked about the behaviour of children on her evaluation form, a peripatetic teacher wrote, "Pupils are fantastically well-behaved – a testament to the teachers and the ethos of the school."
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. Visiting speakers from CAFOD help to develop awareness of the common good, and topics e.g. El Salvador, Bangladesh help to promote tolerance and respect for difference. During the school's Multicultural Week, parents' expertise was used to enhance pupils' learning and widen their horizons. Some gave presentations about their culture, brought food, flags and other items of cultural interest into school to share with the children.
- The school provides many opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. The local Catholic cluster group held a joint retreat day for Year Six pupils and a 'Big Sing, Liturgy Thing' with the local High School and Sixth Form College with the music group, CJM.
- There are close links with the parish and parish priest is highly effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. Children's work is regularly displayed in church.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide outstanding pastoral care to pupils, and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. Staff members are alert to the needs and well-being of all. The development of pupils' personal qualities are considered to be of paramount importance to staff. The respect for the dignity of each individual is evident in the excellent, caring behaviour displayed by children. They are aware that they can seek help from all members of staff, but especially from the Nurture Co-ordinator in the school's nurture area – the Robin Room. Time there is timetabled so children who are particularly vulnerable can access activities such as 'Cool Club', Lego Club and 'R Time'.
- Learning materials and experiences provided in school seek to involve, engage and inspire all children and help to remove any social and emotional barriers to their successful learning.
- The school has a regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for. One recent in-service day was spent examining mental health and well-being. A member of staff commented, "The Catholic values are lived out each day at St. Marie's.....the school always gives me a sense of comfort and belonging. The hand of friendship and support has always been extended to me. Christ-like values are fostered throughout the school starting especially with our headteacher and cascaded down."
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles. Parents are consulted and invited into school to discuss the content used as part of the *Journey in Love* programme.

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.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church. They are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils and cultivate an attitude of love, care and respect for one another.

- Reviews of the school's core values and mission are undertaken by staff members, governors, parents and pupils.
- The development and the provision of the Catholic Life of the school are viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility and thus given a high profile. The Catholic Life of the school and pupils' Religious Education are priorities in the School Development Plan.
- This is also reflected in the school's self-evaluation which involves careful monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school and the school's Mission Statement. This leads to planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- All school policies are reviewed in the light of Catholic teaching and stem from the school's Mission Statement.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is highly effective. As a result, staff members' understanding of the school's mission is excellent. They are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- New members of staff and governors receive induction into school life with the Mission Statement as the focus and are encouraged to actively participate in the school's Catholic Life.
- As leaders, the governing body has great ambition 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 a significant 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 visit the school regularly and take on their specific roles with passion and enthusiasm.
- The school has an extremely close relationship with the parish. The parish priest is a welcome visitor who takes a keen and active interest in school life. The pastoral associate also visits and has enriched the prayer life of the community through her music ministry. She has created a school song which the children enjoy singing.
- The school supports the *With You Always* sacramental preparation programme very well. Staff members attend and support sessions and celebrations.
- Governors and the parish priest attend class trips, assemblies, awareness days and celebrations. They took full part in the most recent whole school Spirituality Day.
- The school has strategies for engaging with parents and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. As a result, parents and carers have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it. In appreciation of the efforts made by the school, a parent wrote, "Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do to make our child feel loved, welcome and inspired to learn."
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision actively 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 outstanding 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.

- Relative to their age and capacity, pupils are religiously literate and engaged young people who use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. Consequently, 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.
- Pupils concentrate exceptionally well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, know what they need to do to improve, and can fully articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They thoroughly enjoy challenging activities and respond very well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are rare.
- Pupils work very well together in co-operation and collaboration especially with their talking partners. They listen courteously to each other and respect each other's views and opinions. They give mature, eloquent answers to questions posed.
- On the day of inspection, lesson observations across the school consistently indicated that pupils worked exceptionally well together and shared their ideas and views willingly. They remained on task throughout their activities, thoroughly enjoyed what they were doing and were often excited by their work. They showed great attitudes to their lessons, displayed excellent behaviour for learning and responded very well to the praise and encouragement that their teachers give them.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by formal and informal assessment, is very good. Pupils achieve at least expected attainment using Archdiocesan data. This has been sustained for the last three years and is an improving trend.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is excellent. Pupils clearly take pride in their presentation and achievements.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers consistently plan lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. As a result of this, teaching is mainly outstanding or at least very good.
- Teachers are competent and confident in their subject expertise and have an excellent understanding of how pupils learn. Accordingly, pupils are inspired to learn, apply themselves exceptionally well and make outstanding progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers and additional adults in classes are enthusiastic in their delivery of the *Come and See* programme and are often dynamic in approach.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work and use engaging, imaginative teaching strategies whilst incorporating differentiation and challenge. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, remain focused on their tasks and concentrate hard in lessons.
- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to outstanding progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Pace of teaching in lessons is swift. Teachers manage time well to maximise learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Teachers use observation and questioning skilfully during lessons in order to identify prior learning and adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils. Big questions are used to great effect to provoke thought and investigation.

- High quality, stimulating resources are used very efficiently to optimise learning for pupils. Information and Communication Technology is used very well to keep children's attention and motivate them to learn. Additional adults are deployed very effectively particularly to support pupils with additional learning needs.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils for Religious Education and they respond positively. In every classroom, pupils are praised for their hard work and thanked for their efforts. Consequently, a positive climate for learning pervades the school and pupils are happy and anxious to please.
- Great use of success criteria is made across the school to share what the pupils need to do to achieve their learning objectives.
- Teachers make good use of thinking skills and personalised learning to suit pupils' individual needs.
- In the majority of classes high quality feedback leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and progress of pupils. Most pupils are given the opportunity to respond, which improves their understanding of what they need to do to improve. This should be consistently applied across the school in line with the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Pupils are assessed appropriately against the draft *Standards of Attainment in Religious Education* and their progress is tracked.
- Parents and carers are kept informed of their children's achievement and progress in Religious Education through newsletters, meetings and end of year reports. As befits the high profile of the subject, it is always the first to be reported on and teachers consistently use the language of the level descriptors from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* when doing so. Parents' views are frequently sought and valued.
- Dedicated faith weeks have explored Judaism and Hinduism. Visitors are invited into school to support these weeks and to share their faith, religious backgrounds and traditions.
- Achievement and effort are routinely celebrated leading to high levels of motivation from all 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 Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which lead to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- Portfolios of assessed work indicate that, across the school, teachers' standardisation of work is accurate. Work is tracked so underachievement can be identified and supported and so higher achievers can be challenged.
- Governors receive data and information regarding impact and progress at termly meetings. They also receive an annual report from the subject leader which shows the range of pupils' abilities. This enables them to challenge all aspects of provision.

- A rigorous monitoring and evaluation schedule is in place and findings inform the self-evaluation document and the school development plan.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education has an inspiring vision of outstanding teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. These are used effectively to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is likely to be outstanding and at least consistently good. She works tirelessly to keep abreast of new initiatives etc. by attending all meetings and briefings. She works in collaboration with the local cluster group to moderate work and share good practice.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and each key stage and phase is creatively structured to build on and enhance prior learning.

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.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer wholeheartedly and confidently.
- When asked about what they did in Collective Worship, a Year Two pupil responded, "We pray to God, we praise God, we sing. It's wonderful, I wish we could do it all day."
- Pupils appreciate the quality of the spiritual experiences they are given and show a great understanding of Gospel values. They have experience of a wide variety of prayer styles including meditation, guided prayer and enjoy composing their own petitions.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship, particularly in the Rejoice part of their *Come and See* topics, with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy. The Young Disciples enthusiastically prepare and lead worship for the school each Friday before the school's celebration assembly. 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. Children and their families are invited to pray the rosary one lunchtime each week in October.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the way many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of singing, in the respectful, prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation.

- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a deep sense of respect for those who think differently and this is reflected in the manner in which pupils prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.
- Collective Worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. 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 all members of the community speak positively about these opportunities.
- Prayer stations and devotional areas are provided around the school and grounds to enable pupils to pray and reflect. The newly created prayer garden, planned and constructed by staff and pupils, has been well used since its inception.
- Relevant staff have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have excellent experiences of the Church's liturgical life. They have a true understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate, but could provide more opportunities for them to lead aspects within class daily worship.
- The school invites adults associated with the community to attend worship in a variety of forms and response to this invitation is excellent. There is always a great turnout from parishioners and families to the school Masses and assemblies and those attending speak highly of how they feel welcomed and valued on such occasions. Pupils really appreciate the opportunities the school provides for their parents and carers to join them.
- In conjunction with the parish, the school provides the *Wednesday Word* each week for families to share the Sunday gospel together at home.

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 to enable staff members to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. Themes are provided each week for staff to develop and these are put in the newsletter alongside prayer and reflection. This enables families to pray and reflect on scripture together.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Leaders have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are appropriate models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They provide a variety of experiences for pupils throughout the week and across the liturgical year.
- They promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship.
- The parish priest is generous with his time, participates in Collective Worship and regularly says Mass for classes and the whole school community.
- Governors are invited to attend all assemblies, school liturgies, celebrations and Masses. They share their experiences of Collective Worship at governors' meetings. In consultation with the staff, they identify resources that will enhance worship and set a generous budget to purchase them.

- Collective Worship is monitored by the headteacher. Leaders offer regular professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning for Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the quality of the Catholic Life of the school by:
 - when next reviewing the school's Mission Statement include practical objectives to demonstrate what members of the community do to live it out;
 - recording pupils' work in Relationships and Sex Education to evidence the impact of provision.
- Continuing to address the areas identified on 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	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	1
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