



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST STEPHEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WARRINGTON

Inspection Date	Tuesday 28 January 2020
Inspectors	Rev. Anthony Kelly Mrs. Annamaria Roberts
Unique Reference Number	111310

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	208
Chair of Governors	Mr Andy McEvoy
Headteacher	Mr Steven Hatton
School address	Sandy Lane Orford Warrington Cheshire WA2 9HS
Telephone number	01925 630100
E-mail address	ststephens_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk
Date of last inspection	Tuesday 18 November 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 Stephen's is an average sized Catholic Primary School, situated in Warrington serving the parish of St Stephen First Martyr.
- There are 208 children on roll of whom 141 are baptised Catholic, 18 come from other Christian denominations and 7 from other faith or religious traditions. Forty-two children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 12 teachers of whom 9 teach Religious Education. Six teachers are baptised Catholic, and 4 teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new Headteacher and Subject Leader.

Key for inspection grades

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

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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St Stephen's is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

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

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They embrace and live out the school's Mission Statement 'Working together to succeed through faith in Jesus Christ'.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary at all times. They are polite and well-mannered and value the diverse community of the school, earning the Gold 'Wise Up Award' which this celebrates. They also show an understanding of the need to forgive, to be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. They thrive with additional responsibilities; The Prefect System, School Council, Play Leaders, Reading Buddies, Librarians and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. Pupils are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and Mission of the school, both, within the school environment and in the wider community.
- The school enjoys a good relationship with Cardinal Newman High School which offers a transition Retreat day for those pupils in Year 6.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. They have a strong fundraising ethos, supporting charitable causes locally, nationally and internationally. They support St Rocco's Hospice and Nugent, among others.
- Pupils participate in opportunities provided by the school for visits to the Metropolitan Cathedral each year, such as the Advent Service and the Eucharistic Voices Celebration.
- Pupils respond 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. One Year 6 pupil commented, "*I want to stay here forever!*", while another stated, "*We can be proud of ourselves*".
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding. *Relationships and Sex Education* is taught across the school in a one-week block in the summer term. This would now benefit from being taught across the school year when this is reviewed in summer 2020.
- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, have an understanding of what it means to have a vocation - one pupil declared, "We have to do what God would want us to do". Pupils recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and the Archdiocese. The school choir has attended church to perform and this is to be explored further in due course. For the current Archdiocesan Synod, pupils have been invited to ask questions to take part in the process.

- Pupils respect and are involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs. Furthermore, the pupils also enjoy learning about other faiths and are given the opportunity to visit other places of worship, for example, the Warrington Sikh Temple, which helps to foster relationships with those from different backgrounds within the wider community.

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's mission 'Working together to succeed through faith in Jesus Christ' is central to the school's ethos.
- All staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school. There is a clear sense of community at all levels, evident in the quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- There are opportunities for staff to further their own development of Catholic Life. The recently appointed headteacher undertook the Archdiocesan Headteachers' Induction Programme and Headteachers annual Spirituality Conference, the deputy headteacher has taken part in the Catholic Leaders' Programme, while the Religious Education Lead regularly attends events initiated by the Archdiocesan Christian Education Team.
- There is a strong link with the Parish Priest who is a very valued presence. He celebrates Mass at the start of the school year, on Holy Days of Obligation, in Advent, during Lent and other celebrations. During the Lenten Masses, he encourages the children to look creatively at Gospel stories through the medium of art. Holy Week is also celebrated through a series of assemblies. The Parish Priest is also a regular visitor to the school, and has helped with *Come and See* lessons when asked and at Christmas 2019 invited the children to send Christmas cards to the Holy Family Parish in Gaza.
- There are excellent relationships within the school which contribute to the warm community atmosphere. A Year 2 pupil said, "I like St Stephen's because everyone is nice and polite". Staff model high standards of behaviour and are good role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. The Prayer Shed, soon to be accessible again after refurbishment, will be a lovely space for acts of worship and spiritual reflection. Prayer spaces also occupy the environment where pupils can take time to be with God.
- The curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to respect the dignity of every human person. The school has implemented an 'Eco Team' and has a strong awareness of current environmental issues.
- There is a real interest in, and a warmth expressed towards each pupil with concern for their individual well-being and development. The school provides strong pastoral care with initiatives such as the 'Leapfrog' Nurture Group and 'Talk about' and there is a commitment to helping vulnerable families.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles. PSHE units such as 'Safer Internet Day' and 'Show Racism the Red Card Day' have been taught while 'A Journey in Love' is used to promote Relationship and Sex Education.

- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. This is implemented through the curriculum, in the application of the 'Golden Rules' and the carrying out of the Mission Statement.
- The Religious Education Lead has taken an Assembly and produced a display on the Archdiocesan Synod 2020.

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. One governor commented that they wanted the children to "leave school knowing they are loved by God".
- 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. The headteacher is an excellent role model for staff and pupils and has made a positive impact during his relatively short time in the school. The governors, too, draw on their own faith and have a visible presence in the community with some volunteering to be Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist in church. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is also viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation which involves monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school and its Mission Statement.
- There are planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school. For example, the school has committed to six weeks of training by the 'Worship Warriors' who will help pupils to develop their prayer life and give them the confidence to be co-leaders in this area. Additionally, the school has worked with the Archdiocese of Liverpool Primary School Improvement Trust to improve strategies and standards across the school.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. The headteacher is an active member of the Warrington Catholic Cluster for Learning Group which meets half-termly, discussing initiatives such as school collaboration and staff Continuous Professional Development. A bi-annual Catholic Schools In-service Training also takes place within the area, while September saw all primary schools in Warrington join together to celebrate 'Liturgy through Music' with Jo Boyce, culminating with a celebration Mass.
- The Religious Education Lead has Senior Leader responsibility which highlights the prominence of the role within the school. She attends termly cluster meetings with other practitioners and is able to lead by example and support other staff in her role. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is strong and they are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- 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. The school communicates effectively with parent and carers through the newsletters and by an App that is accessible to parents. One child stated, "This is one of the best schools because my mum told me it's hard to find a place like this". The school also supports and works with parents and carers through the Archdiocesan *With You Always* Sacramental Programme.

- As leaders, the governing body is ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make an excellent contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They have a strong awareness of the school's mission, are involved in its evaluation, and are ready to challenge as well as support where this is necessary. Governors and staff have also been involved in Archdiocesan training on Relationship and Sex Education and were supported by the Parish Priest on the day, emphasising the supportive working relationships that exist within the community.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school. This can be seen in the school's support of the Archdiocesan Synod.

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 clear progress in each key stage with examples of outstanding progress apparent in children's learning.
- There is an above average number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the school and these pupils are well supported by staff and make clear progress in their learning.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, almost all pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners. They respond well to creative and innovative lessons, many of which are captured digitally via Tapestry and Seesaw in order to inform parents as to how their child is progressing. One pupil commented, "I think everyone works hard in our school".
- Pupils concentrate well and have pride in their work. They work well independently and collaboratively and have an understanding of how well they are doing, of what they need to do to improve, and can articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with passion, great interest and enthusiasm. They are presented with challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary as pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- Formal assessments are carried out termly by each child as recommended by the Archdiocese.

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 high-quality and challenging lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. As a result of this, teaching is mainly outstanding. One pupil declared "there are brilliant teachers here".

- Some teachers are adept at using the Driver words to differentiate lessons, enabling them to monitor progress and to assess where pupils are at. The school would now benefit from this being incorporated into all classes.
- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have an excellent understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves well and make clear progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work, which engages and challenges pupils. Consequently, most pupils are motivated and concentrate well in lessons.
- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to clear progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Teachers manage time well to secure learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Teachers use observation and questioning during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils.
- Teaching Assistants play a valuable role in classroom learning. They work very well with individuals and groups and use effective questioning to challenge pupils.
- Good quality resources, such as Bibles and Information Communication Technology, are used to help bring learning alive. Pupils appreciate and respond well to these.
- Teachers communicate high expectations about Religious Education to their pupils, almost all of whom respond positively. Teachers also use praise very well.
- The school has adopted the Insight tracking system to assess pupils so that pupil progress can be followed over time and prior learning can be built upon. The school finds this especially useful with SEND pupils.
- Assessments are taken each term to monitor pupils' progress. These are monitored internally at first, and then externally, at the Warrington Cluster Group.
- High-quality feedback leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and progress of pupils. Live marking informs pupils of how to improve and provide opportunities for reflection. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond, which improves their understanding of what they need to do to improve. 'Pupil Voice' interviews are also helpful with evaluating pupils' learning.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated with assemblies and rewards leading to high levels of motivation from most 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 Religious Education is a core subject within the school and that the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage. However, this could be improved in some classes by dividing Religious Education into smaller blocks of time on different days to further the impact of learning.
- The Religious Education Lead is provided with management time as part of her core responsibility. She is an inspiring Subject Leader who is very well respected within the school community for the positive impact she has had in the school.

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The Religious Education Lead is committed to Archdiocesan training and gaining further support and development through the local Cluster group. She is also responsible for the induction of new staff within the subject. Here she provides in-house training and support and recommends and books courses for staff in order to help them in their professional development.
- The subject leader for Religious Education has a clear vision for teaching and learning and has a strong level of expertise in securing this vision. Creative examples of Teaching and Learning are evident and the Religious Education Lead is committed to moving the subject forward.
- The school follows the *Come and See* programme of study, as recommended by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This is shared with staff and governors through the *Come and See* yearly planner and the school entrance always reflects current *Come and See* work, highlighting and celebrating pupils' progress and success.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a clear reflection of; frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge, which are informed by current best practice in Religious Education.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The Religious Education Lead works closely with the SEND Coordinator to ensure the curriculum is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.

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 respect and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, show thoughtful and heartfelt responses, and enjoy opportunities to reflect in silence. This is an aspect which The Parish Priest is keen for the pupils to further explore and which could now be further developed in class worship rather than using some time for questions and answers. The pupils also join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence. They realise the significance of aspects of Catholic worship such as the Sign of the Cross.
- Pupils prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence. They clearly enjoy the responsibility of this and are able to deliver it well. Once the training with the Worship Warriors has taken place, they will be able to do this more regularly and with even greater confidence. The pupils are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy and 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. Most pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer.

- Pupils have a strong 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 all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. The pupils have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths and pupils of other faiths can also participate respectfully in Collective Worship in their own meaningful way.

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 prayer is included in all school celebrations, fostering a sense of community felt by all. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff, and pupils are encouraged to find a moment in the day to continue with their worship.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a strong 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 meaningful and all members of the community speak positively about these opportunities. Collective Worship is also monitored which helps to ensure that opportunities are planned well for the children.
- All adults taking part in Collective Worship show enthusiasm during this time of prayer and this helps to create a good example for the children to follow.
- Relevant staff have a strong understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and have the expertise to ensure that pupils have positive experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan clearly and deliver quality worship when appropriate. This could now be done with even greater encouragement. They have a strong understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- The school has made a commitment to further developing the children's appreciation of worship by enlisting the help of the Worship Warriors.
- Opportunities for worship are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults with parents and governors responding positively to this invitation.
- Pupils enjoy the outside space, so a good opportunity exists for the school to use the Prayer Shed for collective worship when this is ready.
- Collective worship is also encouraged and practiced in other areas of school life such as staff meetings and governors' meetings.

How well leaders and 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 policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship.

- Leaders have a strong understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they succeed in making these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are appropriate models of good practice for staff and pupils. They are willing and able to help other members of staff to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship experiences for the children.
- Leaders promote pupils' planning and leading of Collective Worship, an area which can now be extended.
- Leaders offer regular professional development for staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning for Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes. Governors challenge school leaders on how acts of Collective Worship can be further developed in the homes and family settings of pupils. This would be a great way to further enhance the school-home partnership.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the Catholic Life by:
 - teaching Relationships and Sex Education across the academic year to help pupils' understanding of the topic.
- Further develop Collective Worship by:
 - encouraging silent personal reflection so that pupils have quality personal time with God;
 - incorporating a greater use of pupil leadership during Collective Worship.
 - using the outdoor space for worship and reflection.
- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - ensuring a greater use of the driver words in Religious Education there by helping all pupils to fulfil their potential;
 - ensuring Religious Education is delivered in timely slots during the school week in order to maximise learning opportunities for pupils.

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