



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SKELMERSDALE

Inspection Date 27th November 2018

Inspectors Rev. D. Melly Mrs. J. Ryan

Unique Reference Number 119588

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 160

Chair of Governors Mr. J. Killoran

Headteacher Mrs. A. Blacoe

School address Ashurst Road
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Date of last inspection 12 November 2013

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 James' school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in the Skelmersdale area of the Archdiocese, mainly serving the parish of St Richard's.
- There are 160 pupils on roll of whom 89 are baptised Catholic and 31 come from other Christian denominations. Four come from other faith/religious traditions and 36 have no religious affiliation.
- There are eight teachers in the school. Two are baptised Catholic and Seven teach Religious Education. Three teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection a new head teacher and chair of governors have been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St James' 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

- All pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- They contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements to it. Pupils know the Mission Statement and are proud of it.
- All pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of all pupils is exemplary at all times. In proportion to their years they show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others.
- All pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of the school community entails. As a result, they take a leading role in those activities which promote the school's Catholic Life and mission both within school and in the wider community. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. They are keen fundraisers for charities such as St Joseph's Hospice, Queenscourt Hospice, CAFOD, The Good Shepherd, The Poppy Appeal, Children in need and the Skelmersdale food bank etc.
- All pupils highly value the school's chaplaincy provision. The parish priest and deacon are involved in the life of the school and contribute greatly. Pupils take leadership roles especially in Collective Worship and Year Six lead the leavers' Mass in the summer term. All actively participate in opportunities provided by the school to sing and play instruments in a local care home.
- They also take full advantage of the residentials where the opportunities for Collective Worship are particularly appreciated. The parish deacon accompanies pupils and teachers on these visits.
- All pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. Here the work of the pastoral support worker, who recently transformed a room into a Nurture/Prayer room, is particularly valued. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. One pupil said 'We are one family, one piece.'
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian journey. 'Journey in Love' has been introduced and is being well developed.
- All pupils enthusiastically embrace a holistic approach to education; have a profound understanding of what it means to have a vocation and they joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others. They take on the role of pupil parliamentarians, school counsellors, buddies and librarians. They organise the hall for worship, organise a talent show and much more.

- All pupils deeply value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its strong links with the parish communities and the diocese. As a result, they are enthusiastically and regularly involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. They regularly visit the parish church and went to the cathedral during the year of mercy funded by the active Parent Teacher Association. All pupils are confident in expressing pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The school Mission Statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. It is summed up in the motto, 'We belong to the loving family of St James'.
- All staff members are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, such as retreats, staff prayer and continuing professional development on Catholic Life.
- There is a very strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community. Prayer is at the heart of all that is done. The school is a supportive and joyful community. It is obviously a very happy family.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. An exciting and inspiring learning has been created for the pupils.
- All staff members promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and the dignity of every human person.
- The school provides extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff. The contribution of both priest and deacon is valued here.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care to all pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, consistently well taught and celebrate Catholic teachings and principles.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are obviously energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- 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 is a coherent reflection of 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, often creatively conceived with key partners, to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Continuing professional development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs frequently and is engaging, well planned and effective. All in-service offered by The Christian Education Department is availed of. As a result, staff members' understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the obvious benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. At the moment the school wants to encourage parents to participate in 'Stay and Pray' sessions. As a result, parents and carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.
- As leaders, 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. They give freely of their time and expertise.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school. In accordance with the Bishops' requirements, Relationships and Sex Education has recently been introduced.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- All pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- 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. As a consequence, they are fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- All pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- All pupils concentrate exceptionally well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and can fully articulate how they have made progress.
- All pupils approach lessons with great interest, passion and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy tackling challenging activities, and respond exceptionally well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because all pupils obviously enjoy Religious Education and they are never off task.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment is good. There is an obvious progression as pupils make their way up the school. The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, also improves as pupils progress up the school.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Teachers are highly effective in consistently planning high-quality lessons linked to pupils' current assessment and 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, and teaching is never less than consistently good.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence because of their subject expertise and their understanding of the breadth of teaching methods. Consequently, all pupils are inspired to learn and make good and sustained progress.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, all pupils are highly motivated and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers ensure that all pupils are consistently involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to their progress and provides them with a high level of confidence in making further improvements.
- Teachers consistently use time effectively to maximise learning opportunities in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Teachers carefully observe and skilfully question during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, thus maximising learning for every pupil.
- High quality resources, including other adults and Information and Communication Technology are used very effectively to optimise learning for each pupil.
- Teachers communicate high expectations and passion about Religious Education to their pupils who respond with enthusiasm.
- Celebration of achievement and effort, including the living out of the Mission Statement, is central to the teacher's assessment strategy, securing high levels of motivation.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate 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.
- Leaders and governors ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archbishop regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This all results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which leads to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- The curriculum leaders for Religious Education and Collective Worship have 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. Both are passionate about the subjects.

- 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

- Acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Pupils readily take the initiative in leading worship displaying confidence and enthusiasm. Appropriate to their age and ability, they are able to prepare acts of Collective Worship, which fully reflects this understanding.
- All pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. The correct colour is on each focus and the church's liturgical year was explained in one class showing where Advent fits in. This is enhanced by the celebration of the liturgical year both in church and school.
- Pupils display confidence in their use of a wide variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, which uses scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music.
- 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 of other faiths and this is reflected in the manner in which pupils prepare and participate in prayer and liturgy.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school for all pupils, whatever their own particular faith background, and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is obviously part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education.
- Collective Worship is given the highest possible priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experiences of Collective Worship are of such a high quality that they are universally cherished by every member of the community.
- Relevant staff members have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and are passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff members are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Invitations to parents for 'Stay and Pray' sessions has been identified as an area for development.

How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- Leaders have expert knowledge of how to provide policies and guidelines to ensure quality planning and delivery of Collective Worship.
- They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- They are always able to make these accessible to pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship within the school. They are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils.
- They extensively promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship in a variety of contexts.
- Leaders place the highest priority on the professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship. Appropriate in-service has been availed of here.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on the school's self evaluation of Collective Worship with regular reviews of school performance.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Implement the areas for development identified in the Self Evaluation Document especially:
 - inviting of parents to 'Stay and Pray';
 - embedding the Relationship and Sex Education programme;
 - enrolling staff on CCRS to enhance provision.
- Adopt the new planning format for *Come and See* which will aid ongoing assessment.
- Develop the positive marking that is in place incorporating the next steps to be taken in learning.

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	2
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