



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

## ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### LIVERPOOL

---

Inspection Date 14 November 2017

Inspectors Mrs Julie Rourke Rev. Fr. Des Seddon Mr Andy Cocker  
Mrs Julia Ashton

Unique Reference Number 341-2037

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

---

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 568

Chair of Governors Mr Tony Hegarty

Headteacher Mrs Mary Walsh

School address Montague Road  
Old Swan  
Liverpool  
L13 5TE

Telephone number 0151 228 8436

E-mail address mwalsh@stoswaldsschool.com

# 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. Oswald's Catholic Primary is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Old Swan, Liverpool serving the parish of St. Oswald's and St. Sebastian's and the wider surrounding area.
- There are 568 children on roll of whom 448 are baptised Catholic, 45 come from other Christian denominations, and 23 from other faith or religious traditions. Fifty-two children have no religious affiliation.
- There are 34 teachers in the school. Twenty-two are baptised Catholic. Twenty-four teach Religious Education. Twenty teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- St. Oswald's Infant and Junior schools have amalgamated to form a new school. There is a newly appointed governing body, headteacher and subject leader for St. Oswald's Catholic Primary School.

### Key for inspection grades

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

---

© 2017 copyright – Archdiocese of Liverpool. This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Oswald's Catholic Primary 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 at St. Oswald's are ambassadors of their mission, *'Together with Jesus, we will Learn and Grow in Faith.'* They contribute to the school's evaluation of its mission. Annually, pupils lead discussions through the school council about their mission and make any improvements needed.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. In proportion to their years they show an outstanding ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate others.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming councillors, playleaders, sports teams and class monitors.
- They take a leading role in those activities which promote the schools Catholic Life and mission both within school and in the wider community such as fundraising for numerous charities e.g. St. Vincent de Paul, CAFOD, Nugent Care and Marie Curie. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all. Within the locality they support and work alongside local care homes, foodbanks and local businesses.
- Pupils value and fully participate in opportunities provided by the school including a range of after school clubs such as, Spanish, choir, film club and mindfulness. The school supports outdoor educational visits to Ullswater and Colomendy.
- Pupils enthusiastically 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. Pupils were involved in the ADHD Foundation, 'The Umbrella Project,' raising awareness of the differences and the gifts and talents of all. The Year of Mercy provided another great opportunity in service to others such as, writing prayers for the sick and collecting clothes.
- 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. The school community together with Archbishop Malcom was part of the parish celebrations for its recent 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### 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 with clear aims and objectives, is an inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church. It has an impact on the whole of school life.

- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in a variety of school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, such as; regular staff retreats and Advent and Lent liturgies.
- There is a strong sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality of relationships clearly evident on the day of inspection. Prayer is central to school life, which is a welcoming, supportive and joyful community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. Bright displays give worth to pupils' hard work and enjoyment. A display from a staff retreat titled, *'Jesus is the core of our school.'* represents how important it is to be exemplary role models to pupils in their care.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are outstanding examples of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside of the classroom.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. Throughout the school year pupils develop an understanding of local, wider and global charities and the impact of caring for those communities, such as, local community tea parties, CAFOD World Gifts and prayer for others through Collective Worship. One child commented on the day of inspection, *'We are not just thinking of ourselves in school but the whole world.'*
- The school provides extensive opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through for example, continuous professional development opportunities such as attendance at Archdiocesan in-service days and staff and pupil retreat days.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care to pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. Pupils and their families are supported in a variety of ways, though for example, family liaison officers and a healthy families' hub.
- 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. The school ensures an ethos and culture of well-being by looking to support staff in their day to day work.
- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has undertaken training and purchased relevant resources to support Relationships and Sex Education(RSE) alongside Personal, Social and Health Education(PSHE). The school is at the beginning stage of mapping and planning links associated with RSE and PSHE. This is an area the school has recognised needs to be further developed over the coming year.

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

- Leaders and governors are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Leaders are 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 rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge and is clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school.
- This leads to well-targeted and planned improvements, often creatively conceived with key partners, to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.

- Curriculum Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school is well planned and effective. Recent training has included a full revision of the mission statement and Relationships and Sex Education(RSE) development across school. Staff 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 and carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. The school ensures regular newsletters, website updates, twitter, text messages and personal invitations. As a result, parents and carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.
- Parent questionnaires gave high praise to the Catholic Life of the school and in particular of the welcome they receive. One parent commented, *'I love coming to visit St. Oswald's and participate in any of the parental activities. All the staff make me feel very welcome.'*
- 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. The Chair of governors, who is an active member of the parish, and the parish priest, who is also a governor, clearly support and steer the Catholic Life of the school. The links between home, school and parish are strong, effective and well maintained.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes them throughout the school, including for example, taking part in Catholic Leadership programmes, Catholic Education Service contracts and encouraging the commitment of staff to achieve the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

## 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 very good progress in each key stage, with many achieving outstanding progress.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. Lessons are planned accordingly, and teaching assistants are used to great effect to enable this to happen.
- 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. They are fully 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, further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate exceptionally well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, and sometimes what they need to do to improve. In many lessons they know how they have made progress however, more assessment for learning opportunities need to be built into lessons across the school.
- 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 pupils enjoy Religious Education and they are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.

- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment, is outstanding. Pupils achieve above average attainment, and this has been sustained since the opening of the school.
- The subject leader is keen to encourage closer use of assessment data to impact on planning and grouping pupils which will in turn strengthen differentiation across the school.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding. The presentation of books is of a high standard and marking is developmental. Teachers now need to plan ahead for pupils to respond to targets made in books, ensuring this is manageable for both teachers and pupils.

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

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- Teachers are highly effective in consistently planning high-quality lessons using their knowledge of the individual, consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding, so that they learn extremely well. As a result of this, a majority of teaching is outstanding, and teaching is never less than consistently good.
- Planning can be further improved by using the driver words to differentiate one activity allowing for challenges for each group of children.
- Teachers have a high level of confidence because of their subject expertise and their understanding of the breadth of teaching methods. Pupils are inspired to learn and make sustained progress.
- On the day of inspection, because of teachers experience and knowledge pupils were challenged in their thinking. Older pupils explored extended questions about their expectations towards Advent.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, almost all pupils are highly motivated and sustain high levels of concentration.
- Teachers ensure some pupils are 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 to adapt tasks and explanations, maximising learning for every pupil.
- High quality resources, such as, interactive whiteboards, gift boxes, sorting and discussion cards were used very effectively on the day of inspection and optimised learning for each pupil.
- Teaching assistants are well planned for and provide outstanding care and support throughout the school.
- Teachers communicate high expectations and passion about Religious Education to their pupils who respond with enthusiasm.
- Celebration of achievement and effort are central to the teacher's assessment strategy, securing high levels of motivation from pupils.
- Relationships are a real strength of the school. There is a welcoming family atmosphere across the whole school.

## **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.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- 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. This is seen in the next stage of development of tracking for groups of pupils.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The subject leader regularly attends all Archdiocesan in-service training and meets together with a cluster of other schools to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archbishop regarding the Religious Education curriculum are embraced and fully implemented. Since the last inspection the Come and See programme has been fully implemented across the school and all relevant documentation e.g. planning, monitoring and tracking are embedded.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a coherent reflection of rigorous assessment, tracking, monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well-informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which lead to outstanding outcomes in Religious Education.
- 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.
- He actively seeks to keep Religious Education moving forward. He embraces and expertly leads and develops staff. He works closely with and informs senior leaders and the Religious Education governor.
- Governors are supportive, knowledgeable and fully aware of the demands and standards of Religious Education within the school.

## **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.
- Acts of Collective Worship engage 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. They are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and want it to be the best it can be. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their worship planning and how they share prayer with others. Other pupils are visibly uplifted by the worship opportunities created by their peers.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Teachers support pupils in preparing and leading worship appropriate to their age and ability.
- On the day of inspection pupils read Scripture; the teacher reinforced its message and encouraged silent reflection. In another observation, pupils were encouraged to go forth and take the message home, remembering someone special who is now with Jesus. Pupils are sharing their faith beyond school with their families.
- Pupils display confidence in their use of a wide variety of traditional and contemporary approaches to prayer, 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 and are an inclusive prayerful community.

### **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 for all pupils and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is 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 cherished by every member of the community. Great value is given to planning rejoice celebrations following their Come and See topic. Pupils' planning and preparation is beautifully presented.
- Staff 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. There are regular staff retreats and opportunities for reflection.
- Staff 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. The subject leader shares his expertise and promotes and celebrates the high standard of worship across the school.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and there is a great response to this invitation.

### **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 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 and in the locality. Staff are spiritually fed and are models of outstanding practice for pupils because they too pray and reflect.
- 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.
- Leaders, governors and the parish priest ensure that they are an inclusive worshipping community where they do not merely tolerate but embrace and welcome all into their school family. They are consistently updated and informed about the impact of worship across the school.

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

- Update the Self Evaluation Document and continue to improve and develop areas outlined in this report.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
---	---

### 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***