



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT NICHOLAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

LIVERPOOL

Inspection Date Tuesday 4th December 2012
Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel Mrs. M. Connolly
Unique Reference Number 104657
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 150
Chair of Governors Canon A. O'Brien
Headteacher Mrs. Vanessa Nice
School address Orthes Street,
 Liverpool,
 L3 5XF.

Telephone number 0151 709 5532
E-mail address v.nice@st-nicholas.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of last inspection 23 June 2009

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. Nicholas' school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in an inner city area of Liverpool. It serves the parish of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King although many of the pupils come from a wider catchment area.
- There are 150 children on roll of whom 69 are baptised Catholic, 6 pupils come from other Christian denominations, and 75 from other faith or religious traditions.
- There are 12 teachers of whom 8 teach Religious Education. Eight are Catholic. Eight teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last inspection there has been a new headteacher appointed. The Religious Education subject leader is currently on maternity leave and another member of staff is undertaking the role temporarily in her absence.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness:

St. Nicholas' is good in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

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

- Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of the school's Mission Statement. 'St. Nicholas' is an inspiring and aspirational learning community, following the example of Jesus'. They are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school by showing an outstanding commitment to living it out on a daily basis.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of belonging to the school. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members of this most inclusive school community.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility from their earliest years by becoming councillors and playground buddies. In the wider community pupils act as ambassadors of the school during off site visits i.e. to the Cathedral in support of parish events, singing in the local hospital and attendance at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Day.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities and outreach to the local and wider community e.g. Nugent Care, CAFOD, MacMillan Cancer Care.
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential activities. Pupils in years 4, 5 and 6 visit Colomendy Centre for Outdoor Education, Mold and PGL in Boreatton Park, Shropshire.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their outstanding personal relationships.
- Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and SEAL materials are used effectively to aid this. Pupils benefit from an extremely caring and supportive environment. The school employs a Pastoral Care Mentor.
- They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other's achievements at their weekly assemblies.
- They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences through participation in liturgical events in school and in their own parishes.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life. They are reflective and enquiring.
- The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating and enriches pupil's sensory experiences. The school benefits from quiet inside and outside devotional areas.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local Faith and religious communities by taking part in parish liturgies and choral events, the immediate neighbourhood served by the school though supporting parish projects and outreach in the wider community through fundraising. They show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions.

How well pupils' achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Pupils' achievement in Religious Education is good.
- The school has embraced the *Come and See* programme and the needs of all the pupils are being met. In the Nursery the range of activities provided in continuous provision is used very effectively to engage and enthuse the youngest pupils.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. They make very good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities given that many children in the school have English as an additional language.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender or ethnicity.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding.
- Assessments undertaken to date and scrutiny of workbooks provides evidence of pupils generally attaining a good level for their age and stage of development.
- Pupils have Religious Education targets but these need to be reviewed. There is no consistency in application and a whole school approach needs to be adopted.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity.
- They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and outstanding behaviour. A Year 2 pupil commented on being '*really excited*' by the work being undertaken. This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils work well independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils are good in responding to and participating in Collective Worship.
- They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. This is supported by the chaplain from the Cathedral and the materials provided by the Archdiocese.
- They are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.
- They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Many children are involved in planning, preparing and leading worship however the school recognises this needs to be further developed. All children from the earliest years need to be regularly involved in this.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress.
- Teacher's planning is effective in meeting the needs of all the pupils.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. Where teaching is outstanding the strategies used by teachers enrich pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education.

- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and ensure differentiated tasks are set which consolidate, build on and extends their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Good use is made of time and resources including other adults, interactive white board, God's and Church's story, audio and visual media etc. to maximise learning. Excellent use of the iPad, by some of the youngest children, was observed on the day.
- Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons. Marking informs pupils of their progress and sometimes identifies how they can improve. This needs to be done consistently throughout the school. Teachers need to ensure a response from pupils if marking includes key questions. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The school has implemented assessment strategies which have begun to provide information on the achievement of pupils.
- The tracking of pupils' work in Religious Education needs to be further improved. Pupils have Records of Attainment but evidence suggests that data is not being collated either as a cohort, class or whole school. Therefore standards across the school are not being adequately monitored or measured.
- There is evidence of pupils using assessment for learning strategies in some classes. This needs to be used consistently throughout the school.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs. Staff and governors see Religious Education as the core subject and at the very heart of the curriculum.
- The school using the *Come and See* programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. Appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.
- Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.
- Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Termly newsletters are provided for parents and carers.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. *Come and See* engendered in pupils a real sense of engagement, enthusiasm and excitement.
- Enrichment activities such as choir, Spanish, art and craft, gardening, cookery, school magazine, dance and sports have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The school operates wraparound provision in partnership with Little Explorers and Aigburth Training.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation. This was particularly evident in discussion with Year 6 children who talked about who inspired them and what aspirational qualities they had which was linked to work on the Mission Statement.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals with English as an additional language. The provision for pupils with additional and special needs is outstanding.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. The school has recently covered Judaism. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The Collective Worship provided is good in reflecting the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of Faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the life of the school. The chaplain regularly leads and celebrates alongside the children during Worship.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the Spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles but this needs development to ensure time is given for pupils to make a personal response every time Collective Worship is undertaken.
- The teachers have begun to provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. However, this needs further development to ensure that all pupils are planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers, the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Come and See' programme and celebrations of Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year. The Cathedral clergy are regular visitors to the school. The parish priest is fulsome in his praise of the ethos, mission and work of the school community.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are good in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school. They demonstrate a commitment to the Church's mission in education.
- This is reflected in the Mission Statement outlining St. Nicholas' as a '...inspiring and aspirational learning community, following the example of Jesus' and subsequent code of conduct which flows from it. All those who form part of the school community were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide all aspects of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness.
- Good opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through prayer, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need i.e. supporting the Morecroft carol concert in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, analysis and self challenge. It is a comprehensive document which guides the school well. Since the last inspection the school has made significant progress in continuing to develop the areas it identified as key priorities. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and ongoing areas for development.
- The school provides good induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it for example attendance at NQT days and CCRS.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. An up to date policy is in place which shows regular monitoring opportunities and appropriate timescales.
- A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for all staff and pupils including Collective Worship, Archdiocesan led Spirituality days and opportunities to join in 'Come and See for Yourself' celebrations at the beginning of each new topic.

- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school.
- There are positive relationships at every level leading to a welcoming, happy and caring learning environment for staff and pupils.
- Parents are consulted regularly and involved in the life of the school i.e. supporting reading in the classroom and attendance on school residentials and trips.
- Governors are well informed and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. They are committed wholeheartedly to the Catholic Life of the school. Some staff and governors are actively involved with the 'With You Always' family catechesis sessions on behalf of the parish and the school community.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- The way in which leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education requires improvement.
- The school currently monitors and evaluates performance however, this needs to be rigorously analysed and founded on sound data in order for improvements to be made.
- Teaching and learning is monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary. Sharing good practice will enhance teacher's repertoire and strategies to further enrich pupils' experiences.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all staff including attendance at Archdiocesan in-service Topic days and subject leader days.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The school has purchased 'Classroom Monitor' a computer program to support pupil tracking in Religious Education. As this is in its infancy the impact cannot yet be measured fully at this time. It is vital that a reliable method of tracking pupil progress is put into place to ensure that key areas for development are tackled systematically. This information needs to be shared with all leaders, governors, managers and parents.
- The temporary subject leader is excellent in guiding Religious Education. She shows real commitment and enthusiasm for the role. She is an active member of the parish and supports pastorally with family catechesis. Very good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject and new initiatives are introduced when appropriate. She has led the implementation of *Come and See* and has updated all the subsequent documentation and policies in light of the changes.

What does the school needs to do to improve further?

- Plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils in Religious Education by:
 - using information gleaned through analysis of assessment data to inform planning and track pupil progress;
 - rigorously monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance in order to plan future improvements;
 - assigning Religious Education targets which are meaningful to pupils and an aid to raising attainment.

- Improve the quality of provision and outcomes for Collective Worship by:
 - enabling pupils to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship from the earliest years;
 - providing time and opportunities for pupils to pray both formally and informally during Collective Worship;
 - ensuring pupils always listen to 'The Word' during Collective Worship;
 - creating a whole school themed planner which takes into account the diverse ethnicity of the whole school community.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	3

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 requires improvement and grade 4 inadequate