



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATHERTON

Date of Inspection	Tuesday 24 January 2012
Inspectors	Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Miss Julie Mosinski
Unique Reference Number	106499
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005	

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 – 11 years
Number on roll	178
Chair of Governors	Mrs. Josephine Carter
Head teacher	Miss Carrie Morrow
School address	Lodge Lane Hindsford Atherton Manchester M46 9BN.
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Date of last inspection	Tuesday 12 June 2007

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

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 the school

Sacred Heart school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Atherton in the Wigan district of the Archdiocese and serves the parish of St Margaret Clitherow, Wigan (previously Sacred Heart, Hindsford). There are 178 children on roll of whom 143 are baptised Catholic, 33 come from other Christian denominations, and 2 have no specified faith. There are 11 teachers at the school 8 of whom teach Religious Education. Eight teachers are Catholic and 4 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. One is currently studying for the Catholic Certificate in religious Studies. Since the last inspection, the school has had a considerable turn over of staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Inspection Judgements

**Overall effectiveness:
how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education**

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main Findings:-

Sacred Heart is a very good, welcoming Catholic school. There is a clear vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community. The learning environment is bright and vibrant with many colourful displays. Buildings and resources have been considerably improved and are treated with respect and care. Since the last inspection the school has securely maintained and built significantly on its previous performance. Leaders are continuously striving to improve provision. Self evaluation systems are comprehensive and rigorous. The Religious Education action plan and the self evaluation document are prioritised and closely monitored by governors and senior leaders.

Outcomes for all pupils are outstanding with no significant variation between any major groups. The religious literacy of the pupils is developing very well and they are able to talk confidently about what they do in Religious Education. Pupils are happy to come to school, have a very positive attitude to learning and behave exceptionally well during lessons. They are keen to participate in school activities and take on responsibilities which contribute to the life of the school. They are considerate to others and caring to anyone in need. Pupils' response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding. They enjoy taking part in a variety of liturgical celebrations responding reverently and respectfully.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are outstanding and this promotes outstanding progress. Very effective marking and feedback given to the pupils is impacting on the pupils' awareness of their current learning and what they need to do in order to improve further. Ongoing, stringent monitoring procedures are beginning to have a positive impact on pupil progress. Staff members are very good role models for the pupils and offer a range of opportunities for reflection, prayer and worship which interest and engage the children. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is very good and well-resourced. Pupils are becoming more skilled leaders but need further development in the planning of collective worship

The school is successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Any underperformance found is challenged. The leadership is deeply motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to secure improvement to outcomes and provision. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, has a clear overview of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school and is committed to bringing about the improvements identified thorough self-evaluation. Staff are affirmed, encouraged and supported in their ongoing development. Effective continuing

professional development is tailored particularly to the individual needs of staff. The school's approach and commitment to professional development of staff has been pivotal to improvement in teaching and learning. Effective support and guidance enables staff to contribute to the school's drive to raise standards in this area. Governors are organised and visible in the school community. They fulfil their responsibilities by supporting and challenging school leaders very well. The school makes a good contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. The inclusion of all is a shared vision.

The dedicated head teacher, senior leaders and governors have total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is most definitely an ongoing priority. The school has excellent relationships with the parents who are also very supportive and appreciate all the school does. There are close links with the parish and local community. The parish priest is a frequent, welcome visitor.

Overall the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Improve pupils' learning opportunities and raise standards by:
 - making use of the language of the levels of attainment and the driver words found therein in planning, questioning and in tasks given;
 - using 'Assessment for Learning' strategies more consistently;
 - ensuring that differentiation of task and appropriate levels of challenge are integral to teaching and learning consistently across the school.
- Continue to give the children opportunities to develop the skills to plan and lead Collective Worship by:
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to have a higher level of active participation consistently throughout the school in an age and stage appropriate manner.
- Continue to implement the targets set out in the school's Self-Evaluation Document. That includes:
 - continuing to develop moderation of assessments to ensure accurate levelling of work across all key stages within the school.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage with some pupils exceeding expectations. There are no significant differences in performance between pupils of different groups and all are supported to ensure they make progress according to their capabilities. Pupils generally make outstanding progress in Religious Education throughout the school. They are keen to do well, apply themselves enthusiastically in lessons and work at a good pace. Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they assimilate the key words from the topics which are often reiterated during lessons and displayed. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity. They are developing the skills that enable them to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and are

becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils' enjoy their learning. They are interested, enthusiastic and behave well in both their independent and collaborative work. In discussions, they display maturity and listen willingly to the ideas, views and opinions of their peers for which they show utmost respect.

Pupils make a very good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and show signs of benefitting from it. Older pupils are very clear that their role is to set a good example. Pupils take on responsibilities, e.g. as school councillors, willingly and eagerly and are becoming more active in the Catholic life of the school beyond their routine lessons through their example to others and their outreach charity work. They have a real sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships taking an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. In following their Code of Conduct, pupils are thoughtful and caring of others both in school and in the wider community and are wonderful ambassadors for the school. Pupils can articulate clearly how school is helping them to become better people in the future. They show a developing sense of justice, kindness and consideration to others and this is apparent in all the positive relationships that exist within the whole school community.

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is outstanding. They act with reverence and are keen to participate. Pupils sing enthusiastically, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and confidently. No-one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show mutual respect. Their knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing and they have become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. Children have had opportunities to actively participate through role play, song and prayer in a wide variety of different liturgies and opportunities for worship throughout the Church's Year. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the Scriptures. Collective worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral growth of the pupils. Year 6 pupils have an emerging sense of how to use a liturgical planning framework enabling them to plan and lead school worship with growing confidence and expertise. Others should have the opportunity to become more confident in preparing and leading worship in an age appropriate manner.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education 	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding overall in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make outstanding progress. A variety of teaching styles, in conjunction with imaginative use of

resources including technology, maximises learning. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and most ensure tasks are differentiated so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding. They provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support those with special education needs. Resources are modern and appealing. Effective, positive, encouraging marking is leading to greater pupil awareness of their next steps in learning. Differentiation and appropriate levels of challenge are both emerging but need to be embedded further across the whole school through the use of the driver words from the Levels of Attainment in questioning and task given.

The assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education is good and beginning to be more secure and embedded into school practice. The school's assessment strategies provide detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. Formal assessment tasks are now undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Through regular moderation meetings, teacher assessment and levelling of work should become more consistently accurate. Most teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and to tackle any underachievement. Assessment information is collated, attainment is now tracked and this information is to be shared with governors and parents. This will give the community a clearer picture of attainment throughout the school. It is recommended that teachers use the language of the level descriptors from the levels of attainment and especially the driver words, found therein, in their planning to ensure that tasks are pitched at the appropriate level for all learners especially the higher achievers. Teachers enable pupils to reflect on and evaluate their own work. They also evaluate their own teaching well at the end of each topic. Achievement and effort are celebrated and pupils are consistently affirmed for working and behaving well.

A good Religious Education curriculum is provided by the school which meets the needs of pupils well. The school using the '*Here I Am*' programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and 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, but methods of planning vary considerably across the school. The curriculum is enriched by imaginative strategies to engage pupils' interest including the use of art, role play, digital technology and good quality up to date resources. New curriculum developments are implemented as appropriate. The Religious Education curriculum provides very good opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all and is further enhanced through the use of SEAL activities.

The Collective Worship provided reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the backgrounds of pupils, well. It 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. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship especially through in-service training. Teachers plan Collective Worship

according to Archdiocesan guidelines and are enabling the children to develop their liturgical understanding well. They are starting to provide resources and opportunities to help children develop the skills necessary to plan and lead Collective Worship. Children in Key Stage 2 regularly attend Eucharistic celebrations in school along with members of the parish community. Classes take turns to lead family Masses in the parish church at weekends. Opportunities are provided for parents and carers to participate in a variety of celebrations of the '*Here I Am*' programme and the Church's liturgical year.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	1
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the school

Leaders and managers promote and develop the Catholic life of the school outstandingly. Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of school life. This is reflected in the school's own Mission Statement. All who form part of the school community were involved in the development of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school can evaluate its effectiveness. The school is committed to provide opportunities for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school. The pupils, especially in upper Key Stage 2, are becoming more competent and confident in their ability to articulate the school's distinctive Catholic mission with growing understanding.

Systems for self evaluation are excellent. The school has an accurate picture of its current practice, a clear vision for the future and a commitment to raising standards in all areas. The Self Evaluation Document is a useful, working document that provides evidence of the school's monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. An action plan stems from it and provides a very good basis to celebrate strengths and achievements. Appropriate priorities are clearly identified and realistic targets and timescales set to address areas identified for development. High priority is placed on staff training and induction ensuring that all members of staff have an understanding of the ethos and the vision of the school as well as sound knowledge and understanding of the '*Here I Am*' programme.

Leaders and managers use monitoring data very well to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate and plan future improvements. Monitoring and evaluation systems are very effective. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning, planning and children's work to ensure coverage and consistency across the school. Teachers receive written and oral feedback with support as necessary. Success is celebrated and shared. As subject co-ordinator, the headteacher leads and guides Religious Education outstandingly. She shows great commitment, attends co-ordinator briefings regularly and introduces new initiatives as appropriate. Very good documentation guides and directs all staff

in their delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary. Termly newsletters are provided for parents to inform them of what their children are learning in Religious Education and about how they can do their part to reinforce this. The school works very closely and effectively with the priest from St Margaret Clitherow in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The pupils recognise him as a 'special friend of the school' and appreciate all he does.

Governors are justly proud of their school, loyally support it and discharge their statutory and canonical duties competently. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school by ensuring there is a suitable budget provided and also by acting as critical friends in supporting and challenging all aspects of the Catholic life. They attend school events when possible. The chair of governors knows the strengths and areas the school has for development and understands the challenges it faces. The governors' monitoring role, however, needs to be more fully developed.

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. A 'declaration of rights' personalised by the pupils has been developed. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the backgrounds of all. There are very positive relationships at every level leading to a warm, welcoming learning environment for staff, pupils and visitors. Leaders and managers give pupils opportunities to grow and develop resulting in a strong commitment to serving others within the school, as well as the parish, the local and wider community. The school is involved with many fund raising projects and in the immediate neighbourhood served by the school through, for example, children's involvement as 'Super-councillors'. On a wider scale, links have been forged with CAFOD and leaders invite representatives into school regularly to raise awareness of projects undertaken. Many children make a donation to CAFOD in celebration of their birthdays.

Dialogue and collaboration is encouraged with people who hold different beliefs and values. The use of the '*Here I am*' programme promotes community cohesion very well. Children have explored the beliefs and values of the Hinduism and Judaism. This has helped to promote tolerance and respect for those who think and worship differently. They have become increasingly aware of the world's people and cultures, particularly through the arts.

The pupils are developing an understanding of the common good and an awareness of global and environmental responsibilities. The school community shows a concern for the well-being of those less fortunate than themselves both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources for local, national and global charities e.g. in their donations to the HCPT and CAFOD, and in the compilation of shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse. Parents and carers are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. Their views and opinions are valued. The school has recently worked on an art project with a neighbouring Christian school.

Sacred Heart is a very good Catholic School loved and valued by the whole community. Leaders know their school well and continually strive to raise standards in Religious Education and the Catholic life.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	2