



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### LIVERPOOL

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Inspection Date 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty, Mrs. Julia Ashton

Unique Reference Number 104667

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

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Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 225

Chair of Governors Eithne Proffitt

Headteacher Lisa Salters

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Date of last inspection 25<sup>th</sup> September 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. Vincent de Paul School is an average sized Catholic primary school situated in the Liverpool area of the Archdiocese, serving the parish of St. Vincent de Paul, Liverpool.
- There are 225 children on roll of whom 139 are baptised Catholic, 34 come from other Christian denominations and 34 have no religious affiliation. There are 18 pupils from another faith or religious tradition at the school.
- There are 14 teachers at the school, of whom 7 are baptised Catholic. Twelve teachers teach Religious Education. Ten teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and 3 are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Since the last inspection, a new Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher 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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# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

St. Vincent de Paul 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 truly appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of St. Vincent de Paul's. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement, '*Serving with Love, Striving for Excellence*' and understand that it requires them to be mindful to the needs of others and to work hard to achieve their potential.
- Pupils participate in the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and are part of planning improvements to it. They are loyal members of their school and excellent ambassadors for it.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. Most pupils' behaviour is exemplary all of the time. In proportion to their years, they show a great understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They are very familiar with their 'Golden Rules' and strive to keep them by being kind, helpful, honest, respectful and hardworking. They clearly understand the link between them and their school Mission Statement. One child, at interview said, "We need God's love so we can be more kind, treat others how we would want to be treated and so we can believe in ourselves more."
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of a Catholic school community entails. As a result, they are regularly involved with those activities which promote the Catholic Life and mission of the school both within school and the wider community. They are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for them within and beyond the school community. They clearly understand the mission of St. Vincent de Paul, their patron, and try to replicate it through generous works of mercy and by looking out for the more vulnerable.
- The school choir make a significant contribution in this area. They are active, popular and well-received in the locality. They have taken part in the school's annual Senior Citizen's community day, in a carol singing service held in the centre of Liverpool, have sung at the *iSing* festival in the *Lighthouse Theatre* and performed alongside pupils from a local high school all for the benefit of others.
- The school *Mini Vinnies* group continually seeks ways in which they can enrich the school and the local community. In living their mission of turning concern into action, they selflessly organise a number of charitable projects which directly benefit and impact on the local community. Some of these projects include arranging collections for the local food bank, holding cake sales and co-ordinating the shoebox appeal. On hearing that their new parish priests were Missionaries of Africa, they embarked on a campaign to support the work of *Mission Together* and embraced the concept of '*Children helping Children*'.

- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development and understand that there are systems in place to do so. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Pupils feel valued knowing that they are always treated with dignity and respect. They reciprocate by treating others with kindness and by supporting one another. One child, at interview, told the inspector, *"All schools say they love one another, but this school really means it!"* and another said, *"I want to pass all my skills on to others and encourage them to be confident."*
- Sport plays a big part in the weekly life of St. Vincent de Paul, with opportunities for all to participate in learning new skills or performing with a team at the highest local level. Every child knows that they can represent their school regardless of ability and in doing so, they demonstrate confidence and good team spirit in honouring their opponents and giving of their best.
- Children benefit greatly from a range of residential experiences provided by the school. Pupils are able to participate in ski trips with the Liverpool Primary Schools' Ski Association and Manor Adventure holidays. These opportunities impact greatly on their social, cultural and moral development as they develop self-confidence, and understand the value and importance of teamwork and communication skills.
- Every year, at the beginning of their time in Year Six, pupils are able to engage in a spiritual retreat where they are able to reflect on their life at St. Vincent de Paul and look forward to what is to come. This year, the retreat was based around, *'Living life to the Full'* and pupils explored ways of living a life of faith as a life of joy. This experience enhanced their spiritual development and prepared them well to enjoy their final year in primary school.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding.
- Pupils embrace a holistic approach to education, have an understanding of what it means to have a vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others. School councillors spoke proudly about how they organised a 'Skipathon' to raise money for improvements to the outdoor classroom.
- 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 Archdiocesan 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.

## **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 clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church. It is relevant to the school, follows the example of St. Vincent de Paul in serving others and is embedded in the whole of school life.
- Staff members are enthusiastically 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, such as, staff prayer (including the use of *'Come and See for Yourself'* at the start of new topics in *Come and See* lessons) and continuing professional development on Catholic Life. One member of the leadership team, expressing pride in the school said, *"I truly believe that you can sense and feel our Catholic ethos which is the golden thread which holds our school community together."*
- Following an in-service day, staff members created artwork to depict their Mission Statement. This has been placed around the school as a constant reminder of their collective purpose.

- There is a keen sense of community at all levels, evident in the high quality, supportive relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and obvious signs of its Catholic character.
- Staff members promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils inside and outside the classroom. They consistently apply the school's Golden Rules which results in a peaceful, harmonious environment where each child knows they are cherished.
- The entire curriculum reflects a commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to the dignity of every human person. Through the global dimensions of the school curriculum, the children grow to become responsible citizens that respect and value diversity and strive to make the world a more equitable place.
- The school curriculum has inbuilt enrichment opportunities for pupils that enhance their learning experiences e.g. visits to the theatre, museum etc.
- The school provides many other opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. Staff members praise and encourage their pupils instilling in them self-confidence and a sense of self-worth. The Sisters of Charity work with younger pupils to provide contemplative experiences for them.
- Pastoral programmes, *Personal, Social and Health Education* and *Relationships and Sex Education* are carefully planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles. From Nursery to Year Six, pupils learn about healthy relationships and staying safe through the *Journey in Love* programme in a manner which encapsulates the Catholic ethos.
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide excellent pastoral care to pupils, and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. The school facilitates the provision of personal programmes for resilience, cognitive behaviour and play therapy.
- Breakfast and afterschool clubs provide wrap around care for all who need it. Staff members ensure that these times are fun and enable all age groups to mingle. Older children support the younger ones so all can take an active part.
- The school has a high regard for the pastoral needs of staff and members' needs are understood and catered for. Regular well-being meetings are held and there is a strong sense of team morale among staff members.
- The clergy in the parish, both current and former, are highly effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. Their efforts are much appreciated by staff and pupils alike. The White Fathers, Missionaries of Africa, have recently come to live in the parish and their presence has had an immediate, positive impact on the school.
- Senior leaders and the Religious Education team provide great support for the parish *With You Always* programme for sacramental preparation.

## **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.
- Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- Their Mission Statement is based on the belief that everything of worth comes from God and through working in a climate of mutual trust, in partnership with others, a community of love, peace and harmony can be established. All involved with the life of the school are encouraged to develop their gifts and talents to achieve their full potential and thereby gain in confidence and self-esteem.

- Together, as a community and involving all stakeholders, they recently revised their Mission Statement and its aims and objectives. In doing so, they explored what the mission meant to each of them individually and collectively and renewed their commitment to it.
- Leaders and Governors are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is clearly viewed as a core leadership responsibility.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority by leaders. This is replicated 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 and the Mission Statement.
- This leads to well-targeted and planned improvements, often creatively conceived, to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders and Governors have ensured that the whole community has been involved in implementing the school's Golden Rules for behaviour and in gaining status as a *KiVa* school that promotes anti-bullying. This has promoted a stable, supportive learning environment which strives to cultivate responsible individuals that are capable of making free, moral choices, taking chances and being brave and adventurous.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is very effective. As a result, staff members have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has successful 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/carers have a good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. Newsletters, the school website and parents app all help parents and carers to engage with the Catholic Life of the school.
- In addition to serving a thriving Catholic community, the school welcomes those of other faiths and religions. In keeping with the mission of the White Fathers, who have recently come to work within the community, the school prides itself on promoting a Catholic ethos and sharing values from the Gospel whilst embracing all other religions and enabling all to take an active part in school life and celebrations. Leaders do their utmost to ensure that every child that attends St. Vincent de Paul School leaves there happy and excited about living in a community full of difference and diversity.
- 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 a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They embrace the school's mission, are involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary.
- The school responds enthusiastically to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school.

## **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 and some progress at an accelerated rate. This is clear from assessments undertaken before and after each topic. Pupils are also able to self-assess their learning effectively using a variety of strategies.

- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils. Additional adults in the classroom and the use of the *Come and See* Special Educational Needs support are used to great effect to enable this to happen.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are becoming 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, pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- They are very reflective learners, deep thinkers and effective communicators who listen to one another politely and answer questions articulately.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate very well, have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, know what they need to do to improve and can communicate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with great interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy challenging activities, and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour in lessons is usually outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by formal and informal assessment is at least good. This has been sustained since the last inspection and there is an improving trend.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is outstanding and they demonstrate great pride in their work.

### **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 lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. Teachers make very effective use of the Special Educational Needs material from the *Come and See* website to support children with additional needs. 'Driver words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* are used very effectively to differentiate work and thus meet the varied needs of pupils. As a result of this, teaching is consistently at least good and often better.
- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have an excellent understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils are inspired to learn and make very good progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a wide range of appropriate strategies, including independent and collaborative work. Great use is made of talking partners, group discussions and silent debates. Teachers direct their pupils' discussions highly effectively to encourage them to think deeply. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, thoroughly enjoy their learning and sustain their concentration in lessons very well.
- Most teachers manage time extremely well to maximise learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- Teachers carefully observe and skilfully question during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils.
- High quality, bespoke resources, including other adults are used effectively to optimise learning for pupils. Teachers ensure they deploy any additional adults in ways they can make valuable contributions to learning. All adults in the classroom work very well together to create a positive learning environment.
- Teachers communicate high expectations about Religious Education to their pupils, all of whom respond positively.

- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to very good progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements. A variety of strategies are deployed to enable the children to self-assess their work including the use of the balance wheels and exit trays.
- During lessons, excellent verbal feedback is frequent and leads to high levels of engagement, interest, achievement and progress. Pupils are often given the opportunity to respond, which improves their understanding of what they need to do to improve. Both by entering into silent debates, where pupils elaborate on the comments made by others diagrammatically and by using the snowball technique, pupils become more involved and those who lack confidence are encouraged to participate and speak out more. Teachers should always remember to correct inaccurate spellings of key words from the topic to further enhance pupils' religious literacy.
- Formal assessments are undertaken each term and celebrated through portfolios of work. Work is moderated by staff and context sheets are used well to justify their professional judgements. Leaders then cross-moderate to ensure accuracy of judgement.
- Teachers frequently celebrate achievement and progress and routinely thank pupils for their efforts. This leads to high levels of motivation from pupils in lessons. Progress and attainment are celebrated every week during the school's merit assemblies and at Golden assemblies at the end of each term.

### **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.
- They make certain that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage. Timetables are monitored to guarantee quality time is devoted to the subject.
- Leaders and governors make sure that Religious Education has fully parity to other core curriculum subjects in terms of professional development, resourcing and staffing. An audit of resources is undertaken annually and all classes have key resources needed to enhance teaching and learning.
- All teachers are given the opportunity to develop their own professional practice by attending Archdiocesan training events. Those that attend share their newly acquired knowledge and understanding with the rest of the teaching staff.
- The school also encourages teachers to undertake the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* to enrich their teaching ability.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is thoughtfully and imaginatively planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different key stages and phases.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully embraced and implemented.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a true reflection of frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by current best practice in Religious Education. Excellent use is made of the Archdiocesan Monitoring Pack and as a consequence, monitoring and evaluation systems are rigorous and enable leaders to take strategic action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This leads to at least very good outcomes in Religious Education.
- Work in Religious Education is levelled and moderated. Attainment and progress is tracked termly and the data generated is analysed to identify and rectify underachievement.



- The curriculum leader for Religious Education and her team have a clear vision for teaching and learning and expertise in securing this vision. These are used well to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is likely to be at least consistently very good.
- Governors are kept up to date about attainment and progress in Religious Education at termly governors' meetings. There is a named governor with responsibility for the subject. She is passionate about her work and supports and challenges the subject leadership as appropriate.

## **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 are keen to participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils appreciate adult support as they regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence. They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy. Other pupils are highly 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.
- During both Acts of Worship observed on the day of inspection, inspectors witnessed sincere enthusiasm for worship and deep respect and reverence. Children sang and signed joyfully, reflected silently and were visibly uplifted by the experience.
- Children, in an age appropriate way, are able to gather respectfully, reflect purposefully, pray wholeheartedly and go forth from worship with purpose and vision.
- Pupils have an excellent 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 pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school**

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is part of the life of the school and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect an excellent understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school and enable the staff to prepare well.
- Collective Worship is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of Collective Worship is engaging and all members of the community speak positively about these opportunities.
- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have relevant experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have an excellent understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.

- A prayer room has been developed to provide a space where members of the community are able to explore their faith, spirituality and life's big questions in a creative and interactive way. A variety of spiritual stations are set up to engage pupils. These are changed to reflect their needs and interests depending on what is happening in their lives and in the world around them. A spiritual garden is currently being developed.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is very good.
- The Wednesday Word is provided weekly for children to share the Gospel message with their families at home.
- The Sisters of Charity in Seel Street, deliver a 'Good Shepherd' programme for children in Reception. The programme is rooted in scripture and is inspired by Maria Montessori's principles of education. It enables children's unique spiritual needs and abilities to be nurtured and respected.
- The parish priests are working with the school to build a regular programme of services and Masses. They willingly offer their knowledge and experience to the staff and children.

### **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.
- They ensure all staff have access to initial training and continuing professional development to keep their skills relevant and up to date.
- Leaders have expert knowledge of how to provide policies and guidelines to ensure quality Collective Worship. An annual audit of resources are undertaken to ensure they complement worship and enhance the spiritual experiences.
- They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and are always ready to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are outstanding models of practice for staff and pupils.
- They actively promote pupils' planning and leading Collective Worship. It would be a useful for staff and pupils to use the current Archdiocesan planner to ensure each section is accurately focussed consistently across the school.
- Leaders place high priority on regular professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning for Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes.

## What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to raise the standards in Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship further by:
  - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document;
  - ensure all relevant policies reflect current practice.
- Further develop the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education by:
  - continuing to embed the Driver Words from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* and the new *Standards of Attainment* and ensure both staff and pupils have a thorough understanding of their meaning and use;
  - consistently using the language of the *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* and the new *Standards of Attainment* when reporting to parents;
  - more routinely monitor teaching and learning in Religious Education through classroom observation.
- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
  - embedding the *Journey In Love* programme into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education.

## 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***