

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 is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Ashton-in-Makerfield mainly serving the parish of St. Oswald.
- There are children 332 on roll of whom 288 are baptised Catholic, and 23 come from other Christian denominations. 21 have no religious affiliation.
- There are fifteen teachers. Fourteen of which teach Religious Education. Nine teachers are baptised Catholic. Five teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Since the last Section 48 Inspection there has been a new headteacher, deputy and Religious Education subject leader 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. Oswald's is an Outstanding school 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 appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life at St. Oswald's. They know, own and live out their Mission Statement. Their own Code of Conduct 'Ozzie's Way' based on the acronym HAPPY is truly alive in the school.
- 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 ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They are quick to congratulate others and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils say they enjoy their weekly celebration assemblies where they receive a 'Ozzie's Way Champion' certificate.
- Pupils behaviour is exemplary. They are highly regarded as ambassadors of the school when out in the local community.
- Pupils enthusiastically embrace the demands that members of the school community entails such as becoming school councillors, 'garden gang' eco councillors, prefects, and playground rangers.
- 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. CAFOD, Nugent, Children in Need, Macmillan, Samaritan's Purse and Fairtrade to name but a few. Within the locality they support Wigan and Leigh Hospice and donate food to be made up into hampers shared at school events. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all.
- Pupils value and fully participate in opportunities provided by the school including a range of after school clubs such as; performing arts, creative, Healthy eating, science, sewing and seasonal sports.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. They have an outstanding sense of belonging. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. On the day of inspection, a group of Year 6 pupils commented that, "*Our school is inclusive, outstanding, impeccable and we live the way of Jesus.*"
- The school choir performs at school and community events including singing as part of a 'Singalong Bingo' for the elderly and supporting St. Oswald's Community Helping Develop Overseas Communities (SOCHDOC) fundraising events.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have begun relationships and sexual development within the context of a Christian understanding but this needs to be further embedded into school life.
- Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to undertake an outdoor residential visit. They attend Robinwood Activity Centre in Cumbria.

- 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 have benefitted from a visit by 'Rock Kidz' focusing on bullying and being unique during Anti-bullying week. This was the inspiration behind 'Ozzie's Way' which has had such a profound effect in the school.
- Pupils in Year 5 have recently had some sessions on meditation. This is an area which is being further developed in the school.
- 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 celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments.
- Pupils have visited the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King as part of the Nugent Advent celebrations.
- 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, 'Love Jesus, Love Learning and Love Each Other,' sums up daily life at St. Oswald's.
- All staff are fully committed to its implementation across the curriculum. They enthusiastically participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school.
- St. Oswald's is an extremely supportive and joyful community. There is a keen sense of community at all levels, evident in the high-quality relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through concrete and effective signs of the school's Catholic character. The aesthetically pleasing displays, classroom focus' and reflective spaces all create an overwhelming yet calm ambience which exudes St. Oswald's catholicity and ethos. This is tangible throughout the school.
- The school benefits from a dedicated prayer garden. This is lovingly maintained by pupils.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models 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 through its fundraising, eco stewardship and numerous outreach opportunities. This is a real strength in the school.
- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all pupils and staff through prayer, collaboration with the High School and continuous professional development opportunities i.e. accessing Archdiocesan training and attending in-service days.
- The school has hosted 'John Burland' who shared his unique style of Catholic musical praise and worship with the school community. Pupils said that they "... loved his music and songs and sing them all the time with actions."
- Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils, and there is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.

- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and pupils and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for. Workshops are offered to parents in areas of the curriculum.
- The school has a very active parent and teacher association which supports the school by organising social and fundraising events.
- The school supports the parish, the pupils and their families undertaking the With You Always Sacramental programme.
- All the relevant documentation is in place and the school has made a commitment to support Relationships and Sex Education using *Journey in Love* alongside Personal, Social and Health Education and outside agencies.

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 Mission Statement is truly alive in the school. Its aims and objectives are an expression of the educational mission of the Church. It is recommended that a full review of the Mission Statement is held to ensure all current members of this inclusive community i.e. pupils, parents, staff governors and parishioners share in developing it following the appointment of a completely new senior leadership team.
- The schools' 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 priority by leaders and is reflected in the school's self-evaluation document which is a coherent reflection of monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Relationships at every level are outstanding across the school. The school has very strong links with the local High School and collaborates with other local feeder schools.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. As a result, staff understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. The whole school community needs to be involved in reviewing the Mission Statement.
- 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. The school offers an open-door policy, prospectus, sends out regular newsletters, has a Twitter feed and an up-to-date website. As a result, parents and carers have an outstanding understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it.
- As leaders, the governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. The deacon is also the link governor for Catholic Life and Religious Education. He is very active in the school. His pastoral support and commitment to all aspects of school life including supporting *Come and See* lessons is commendable. The staff and pupils highly value his ministry.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision for the Archdiocese throughout the school.
- Leaders and governors have made a commitment to further develop Relationships and Sex Education throughout the school alongside Personal, Social and Health Education. A provision map needs to be created to show where it is being delivered across the whole 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 excellent progress in each key stage.
- Groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are also making progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.
- Pupils, relative to their age and capacity, are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. Pupils are 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 to further develop as competent learners.
- Pupils concentrate well and understand how well they are doing.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils enjoy a range of activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning.
- Behaviour for learning is exemplary because pupils enjoy Religious Education and say that disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in books, is outstanding. Pupils take pride in their workbooks and the presentation is of a good standard.
- The Rejoice learning journals started in September are a real celebration of all the work which takes place during Religious Education lessons. However, these need to be dated.
- Pupils' are undertaking formal assessment in line with Archdiocesan guidance and evidence kept.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- On the day of inspection there was some outstanding practice observed with nothing less than good. Teachers and other adults used the language of the standards i.e. driver words routinely as part of their repertoire to enhance pupils growing awareness of challenge during lessons.
- Staff are using the most up to date Archdiocesan template for planning Religious Education.
- Some teachers plan very good lessons and do use the language of the standards i.e. driver words, but not enough is currently linked to pupils' on-going assessment. However, this will improve as the new interim standards become more familiar over the coming months.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual, paired and collaborative work. Consequently, pupils are inspired, motivated and concentrate extremely well in lessons.
- There is evidence in books of continuity in lessons and across sequences of lessons.
- In the best lessons observed teachers used questioning techniques very well. They adapted explanations and tasks using the language of the standards i.e. driver words catering for the needs of all pupils. However, there was no assessment for learning observed. This needs to become a regular feature during activities.

- Formal assessments are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance and portfolios of evidence kept. Some of this evidence is currently not accurate at the higher standards. This should improve as staff become more familiar with the new interim standards and more opportunities to moderate pieces of work internally given.
- Enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education is promoted using high-quality resources e.g. Come and See website, God's and Church's Story, audio and visual media etc. However, there was no evidence of pupils using ICT as part of their learning. This needs to be considered when teachers are planning activities. Pupil voice through questionnaires and discussion on the day of Inspection echoed this sentiment.
- Other adults are used very effectively to optimise learning for pupils who need their support. During lessons they work hard to develop pupils' confidence in undertaking and completing tasks. They use the language of the standards well to support this.
- End of topic assemblies are routinely planned for each class to share the different aspects of the Religious Education programme. These are well attended by governors and parents.
- Evidence in books shows that marking is very positive especially in upper Key Stage 2. In some infant classes it is too onerous and verbal feedback would be much more effective.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated immediately leading to outstanding levels of motivation from pupils.
- Pupils have studied Judaism, Islam and Hinduism as part of their Religious Education lessons. The school has invested in visits to other places of worship and visitors who shared their own experiences with the children. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for others of a different Faith or religion.

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 in each key stage.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education has full parity with other core curriculum subjects including professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. The subject leader regularly attends Archdiocesan in-service training and meets together with other cluster schools to support monitoring and evaluation of the subject. There is a great commitment to staff undertaking Continuous Professional Development in all aspects of leadership in the school.
- 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 fully 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 informed by best practice in Religious Education.
- Whole school tracking is in place. Considering the Bishops directive to implement the new standards of assessment, the school is currently looking at ways to develop whole school tracking in line with other core curriculum subjects.
- The subject leader is a real strength in the school. She has a high level of expertise, is enthusiastic and totally committed to the role. Since the monitoring visit she has continued to drive forward the subject and is endeavouring to further improve teaching and learning in Religious Education.

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. There is a link governor for Religious Education who supports the subject leader in her role.

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 are developing a firm foundation for liturgy.
- 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 are involved in planning, preparing and leading worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer.
- Pupils value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer and say that they really enjoy taking part in Collective Worship.
- Every class nominates '*Wednesday Worders*' who are singled out during a liturgy of the Word for making a commitment to living in Jesus' way. Pupils say that they "*...enjoy this immensely!*"
- Pupils have an outstanding understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities.
- They are regularly part of the celebration of Mass in church where they support in a variety of ways including acting as altar servers and readers.
- The experience of being immersed 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.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is a core part of the life at St. Oswald's and prayer is included in all school celebrations. Praying together is part of the daily experience for pupils and staff.
- Staff regularly use 'Come and See for Yourself' Collective Worship materials prior to beginning a new Religious Education topic.
- Collective Worship and resourcing is given a high priority in the school. Portfolios of evidence are collated for monitoring purposes.
- Staff have become more skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship and are providing opportunities for pupils to develop a firm foundation for liturgy.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. Evidence suggests these experiences for both pupils and staff are reflective, prayerful experiences.
- Portfolios of evidence of Collective Worship are a real celebration of the range and variety of experiences pupils and staff plan for.

- Relevant staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have outstanding experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Opportunities for Collective Worship are not yet routinely planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school. This could be further developed by offering opportunities to 'stay and pray' or 'pick up and pray' on occasion.
- The school uses the *Wednesday Word* as part of their regular liturgy of the Word celebration. Pupils are given the opportunity to seek out words hidden around the school as a focus for that weeks' celebration.
- The parish priest regularly presides at celebrations of the Eucharist in church assisted by the deacon. The deacon provides pastoral care in the school in a variety of ways. They are fulsome in their praise of the school community.

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 know how to provide policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. There is a policy in place for Collective Worship.
- Leaders enable all adult members of the school community to take part in leading or facilitating acts of Worship across the school. This needs further developing to include the wider school community.
- Resources are regularly reviewed. New ones are regularly purchased to enhance Collective Worship experiences. John Burland music and visual media are used routinely to support Collective Worship.
- Leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are appropriate models of good practice for staff and pupils.
- The deacon is the link governor for Collective Worship. He uses his active ministry to support the prayer life of the school as well as supporting the subject leader in her role.
- Staff promote pupils' planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship. By facilitating throughout they ensure meaningful, quality experiences are delivered.
- Leaders and governors have made a commitment to enhance the prayer life of the school. Some staff have recently undergone training in meditation techniques. This will become a feature of the school over the coming months.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the work being undertaken in Catholic Life by:
 - undertaking a full review of the Mission Statement, its aims and objectives led by a member of the Archdiocesan Christian Education Team;
 - continuing to embed '*Journey in Love*' into lessons to support Relationships and Sex Education across the whole school.
- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - developing a tracking system which supports assessment, reporting and monitoring of Religious Education for the new interim standards in line with other core curriculum subjects;
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document.

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