



# ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

## INSPECTION REPORT

### SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### LEIGH

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Inspection Date 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty,  
Mr. Dave Williams, Mr. Barry Broderick

Unique Reference Number 106502

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 4 - 11

Number on roll 295

Chair of Governors Mrs. Patricia Turton

Headteacher Mrs. Helen Ahmed

School address Windermere Road  
Leigh  
Wigan  
WN7 1UX

Telephone number 01942 674226

E-mail address enquiries@admin.leighsacredheart.wigan.sch.uk

Date of last inspection 22<sup>nd</sup> January 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

- Sacred Heart School is a larger than average sized Catholic primary school situated in the Leigh area of Wigan and serves the parish of St. Edmund Arrowsmith.
- There are 295 children on roll of whom 185 are baptised Catholic, 34 children come from other Christian denominations, 43 are of another faith or religious tradition and 33 have no religious affiliation.
- There are 15 teachers at the school, 12 of whom are baptised Catholic. Fifteen teachers teach Religious Education. Ten teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Pupils are taught in 11 classes from Reception to Year 6. This includes some mixed-age classes.
- The Religious Education Co-ordinator and the Chair of Governors are new to their positions since the last inspection.

### Key for inspection grades

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

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# OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Sacred Heart 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 appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They understand the sentiments of the Mission Statement and how they live their school motto, 'With faith in Jesus, love and teaching, we grow' out on a daily basis.
- Pupils participate in the school's annual evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission and the school councillors are part of planning improvements to it.
- Pupils show a respect for themselves and others as made in the image and likeness of God. The behaviour of most pupils is excellent all of the time as they closely follow their school Code of Conduct. They show an understanding of the need to forgive and be forgiven. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils accept the responsibilities of living within a Catholic school community. 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 willingly and proudly take on roles and responsibilities to support the Catholic Life of the school e.g. as Eco councillors, table pals, buddies and prefects. They are superb ambassadors for their school being friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors.
- They are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for them within and beyond the school community. Pupils participate in, and often initiate, fund raising opportunities for local, national and global charities e.g. Wigan and Leigh Hospice Toy Appeal, Nugent Care's Good Shepherd Fund and Cancer Research. Pupils are generally mature and have an excellent understanding of what is fair and just.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. They follow the values the school promotes very well.
- Pupils, appropriate to their age and capability, have a good understanding of loving relationships within the context of Christian understanding.
- At Sacred Heart, the children are extremely accepting of each other, regardless of their different cultures and backgrounds. This leads to a very cohesive school community where pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs.
- 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. They are quick to respond to the needs of the less fortunate and participate in a variety of projects that benefit others e.g. the pensioners' tea party, Fairtrade activities and wearing 'Silly Socks for Syria'.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community. As a result, they are involved with parish celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments. Pupils join parishioners for shared monthly Masses and activities e.g. saying the rosary with the Legion of Mary during October and leading Stations of the Cross during Lent. They enjoy the many visits the parish priest makes to the school, especially the times he leads them in meditation.

- Two pupils have worked hard to complete all their assignments and activities and achieved the 'Faith in Action' Pin Award. Others are presently undertaking it.

## **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.
- Staff are committed to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate enthusiastically in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school, such as staff prayer, meditations and Continuous Professional Development on Catholic Life including the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*.
- There is a clear sense of community at all levels, evident in the quality and strength of relationships and the centrality of prayer to the whole of this diverse community.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. Great care is taken to ensure it is well cared for and fit for purpose. A striking depiction of the school Mission Statement graces the entrance and there are many other beautiful displays throughout the building which celebrate the school's Catholic identity.
- Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are excellent role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. The Area Police Community Support Officers take an active part in the life of the school and help the children to be confident, safe and know how to behave appropriately.
- The curriculum reflects a great commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, to care for our common home and to promote the dignity of every human person.
- The school provides many opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff all of whom participate enthusiastically. The school has just introduced a Mini Vinnies Group and celebrated the introduction with a whole school assembly to 'turn concern into action'.
- The parish priest is highly effective in supporting and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. He is a frequent and welcome visitor who provides spiritual nourishment for the school community.
- Policies and structures are in place, which provide truly outstanding pastoral care to pupils, and there is a commitment to support the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. A Pastoral Leader and Learning Mentor provide exceptional care for those pupils who need support and break down their barriers to learning. Staff closely monitor pupils' social, emotional, behavioural development and vulnerability.
- The school has a real regard for the pastoral needs of staff and their individual needs are understood and catered for. Staff well-being is a priority for the school.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are well planned, taught very effectively and truly reflect Catholic teachings and principles. Pupils are well supported and nurtured throughout their time at Sacred Heart.
- The school is committed to undertake Rainbows training the near future in order to become a hub of support for those in the local community that suffer bereavement or loss.

## **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.
- They ensure that the Mission Statement, school motto and five special values are lived out by the whole school community. It is referred to and displayed throughout the school.

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a public commitment to the mission of the Church. They are well regarded as models of Catholic leadership by both staff and pupils. The development of, and provision for, the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility and a priority for the school.
- This is reflected in the school's accurate self-evaluation which involves monitoring, analysis and self-challenge and is clearly focused on the school's Catholic Life and the Mission Statement. This leads to planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- Sacred Heart is a happy, multicultural school in which every faith, belief, culture and opinion is embraced and celebrated. The school's five special values are promoted and clearly adhered to by this close, diverse community.
- The welfare of the children is taken seriously by leaders and all staff. Adults are considerate and closely follow the school values in dealing with those in their care.
- The school gained a FairActive Award and plans are in place to obtain further Fairtrade awards in the future.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is very effective. As a result, governors' and staff members' understanding of the school's mission is excellent. They are always involved in shaping and supporting it.
- Many of the school's senior leaders play active roles in the church community and are well-known within the parish.
- The school has 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 and carers have great understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. Their views and opinions are sought throughout the year and their comments and suggestions for improving the Catholic Life are considered by leaders. In their recent questionnaires, the majority of parents reported that the school made them welcome and that they were happy with the values and attitudes that the school teaches.
- 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 an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are committed to the school's mission, are involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. They regularly share formal and informal meetings with staff and receive termly reports to ensure they are up to date with new initiatives etc.
- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school. This is evident in how the new Relationships and Sex Education Policy has been implemented recently.

## **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. As a consequence, pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are fully committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- They concentrate well, have a secure understanding of how well they are doing, of what they need to do to improve, and can articulate 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 outstanding because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual. They apply themselves diligently and work at a swift pace.
- On the day of inspection, behaviour for learning was exemplary in all classes. Pupils co-operated extremely well with their peers and remained on task, working very productively throughout their activities and showed enjoyment and enthusiasm for their work. At interview, they spoke enthusiastically about their lessons and could answer questions posed very well with sound knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher and formal assessments, is very good. Pupils achieve very well over time. This is an improving trend.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work, is excellent. Pupils generally take a great pride in their work and present it very well.

### **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 lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. As a result of this, and the evaluation of their planning, teaching on the whole is highly effective.
- Teachers make very good use of any professional development provided so are confident in their subject expertise and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves well and make excellent progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a wide range of suitable strategies, including individual and collaborative work. They use a variety of teaching and learning styles and questioning techniques to engage pupils and maintain their attention and concentration. Excellent use is made in most classes of the 'Think, Pair, Share' strategy which enables all children to discuss their ideas and opinions effectively.
- Activities are appropriately differentiated to meet children's learning needs. Subsequently, pupils are motivated to work well in lessons and achieve success.
- Teachers communicate high expectations of work, attitude and behaviour. Pupils consistently make a very positive response.
- High quality feedback leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and progress of pupils. At interview on the day of inspection, pupils were unanimous in their opinion that they enjoyed Religious Education, and one child said that teachers 'make it fun - and you are still learning!'
- Marking across the school is very good and exemplary in some classes. It is frequently linked to the lesson objective and to the 'Driver Words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education*.

- Teachers often give pupils time, so they can reflect on their work and ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. They often pose questions when marking and build in 'fix it' time to give children the opportunity to respond. This contributes to their excellent progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Teachers manage time very well to secure learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons. Pace during lessons is generally very good.
- Teachers use observation and questioning during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving learning for pupils. They make excellent use of Assessment for Learning strategies and praise, so building pupils' self-esteem.
- Excellent resources, including other adults and technology, are used very effectively to optimise learning for pupils.
- Achievement and effort are frequently celebrated in a variety of ways including stickers, notes home, merits, Golden Time etc.

## **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.
- It is clearly viewed as the core subject in the school and is regularly discussed at Senior Leadership, staff and governors' meetings.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation. There is always an action plan for Religious Education in the school's overall development plan.
- Leaders and governors make sure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage. They safeguard the required amount of curriculum time for Religious Education in each key stage.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.
- Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation of Religious Education is a reflection of frequent assessment, tracking, monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which is informed by current best practice in Religious Education. This results in strategic action taken by the school which leads to excellent outcomes in Religious Education.
- The Senior Leadership team monitor Religious Education sensitively and effectively in a variety of ways including learning walks, observations, scrutiny of work etc. Findings are shared with governors.
- Formal assessments are rigorously undertaken, levelled and subsequently moderated across the school and the local cluster group. This ensures consistency in teacher judgements. Progress is then carefully tracked across the school.
- The curriculum leader for Religious Education is a great role model for staff. She has a clear vision for teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. These are used to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is likely to be at least consistently good and often outstanding. She has made a significant impact since taking over the leadership and has great passion for the subject. She has a high profile within the school and ensures Religious Education is discussed regularly at staff and senior management meetings and has priority in development plans. Subsequently, staff members understand the importance of the subject and are kept up to date with curriculum changes etc.

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils to secure coherence across the school particularly within mixed age classes.
- The subject is reported very well in a detailed, personal manner to parents who are given opportunities to help their children at home through, for example, curriculum newsletters.
- The parish priest's active participation in school life enhances the curriculum and makes a significant impact on the children's understanding.

## **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.
- They act with utmost reverence and readily participate in Collective Worship. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and confidently.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence. They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy. Other pupils are thoroughly engaged by the worship opportunities planned by their peers. They frequently evaluate their worship sessions sensitively.
- During their interview on the day of inspection, Year 6 pupils spoke about how much they had enjoyed preparing and leading worship for younger pupils in school. Another child shared how she had used the *Wednesday Word*, provided by the school, prayerfully at home with her family.
- Pupils use a variety of approaches to prayer which includes scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayer including traditional and contemporary, formal and informal.
- They value and participate voluntarily in liturgy and prayer. They have enjoyed the opportunities to pray the rosary with the Legion of Mary and to lead the Stations of the Cross in church during Lent.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and use Archdiocesan resources very effectively to support their planning of appropriate worship opportunities at these significant times. Pupils have organised assemblies, prepared Masses and acted in plays to celebrate key times in the Church's year.
- All pupils act very respectfully during times of prayer and worship. 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 inclusive manner in which 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 good.
- 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 understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- 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.

- A variety of opportunities are provided for different groupings e.g. class, year group and whole school. Staff members lead most sessions, children lead others, and many are led by teachers with support from children.
- Relevant staff have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have positive experiences of the Church's liturgical life. They are excellent role models for pupils to emulate.
- Visitors, including members of the parish Legion of Mercy have provided opportunities for voluntary prayer and worship.
- Staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a very good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and use a wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Opportunities for worship are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is improving. Parents and carers are invited to 'Stay and Pray' with their children on a regular basis. They are also invited to attend Masses, assemblies etc.
- The *Wednesday Word* is provided by the school for families to share the message of Sunday's Gospel at home together.
- The school has very good resources to focus pupils' attention and a 'Prayer House' has recently been purchased to enhance worship outside.

### **How well leaders, governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders and governors are good in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship.
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and enjoyed by adults and children alike.
- Leaders have provided policies and guidelines to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. These currently need updating.
- Leaders have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. They make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context and set weekly themes for staff to follow. Members of the school community enjoy their experiences of Collective Worship and always take a mission away with them to live throughout the day which leaders regularly refer to during subsequent gatherings.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school, especially the headteacher, are outstanding models of practice for staff and pupils.
- They promote and encourage pupils' planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Leaders offer regular professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes and ensure it is evaluated frequently by staff, children and parents.
- The headteacher reports to governors about how the Church's seasons and feasts are celebrated within the school.

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

- Continue to develop areas for development identified in the school's own self-evaluation Document. These include:
  - embedding the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum across the school to enable the children to have a good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development appropriate to their age and stage of development;
  - reviewing the school's Mission Statement during a Mission Day within the academic year;
  - continuing to ensure that children are given time to reflect and say their own prayers during Collective Worship.

# 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	2
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	2

***Key to judgements: Grade 1 is Outstanding, Grade 2 Good, Grade 3 Requires Improvement and Grade 4 Inadequate***