

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

St. Bernadette's is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Shevington, Lancashire. The school serves the local parish of St Bernadette's and a small number of other local parishes. There are 192 children on roll of whom 184 are baptised Catholic, 1 pupil comes from another Christian denomination. Seven children have no religious affiliation. There are 8 teachers of whom 7 teach Religious Education, 6 are Catholic. Eight teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. At the time of inspection building work was taking place to enlarge the school building. In September 2011, the deputy headteacher was appointed the in the role of Religious Education coordinator.

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:-

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is good with many outstanding features in providing Catholic Education. There is a clear vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community. Since the last inspection the school has securely maintained and built on previously good performance. Self evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Outcomes for pupils are good with outstanding features. There is no significant difference in performance between groups of pupils. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good. The school is successful in addressing the areas it has identified for improvement. The leadership team is deeply motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to secure improvement. Staff are affirmed and supported. Teachers are provided with In-service to support their ongoing development. Realistic and challenging plans stem from the accurate analysis obtained through monitoring and are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Any underperformance is challenged.

St Bernadette's has a warm, family atmosphere. Art work and display work is of a very high standard and staff are encouraged to use their talents to produce and display inviting and reflective work. There are stimulating displays and hideaway corners that encourage pupils' and visitors alike to be a part of learning at St Bernadette's. This sets a standard to pupils and visitors that all work at St Bernadette's is given care, attention and is something to be proud of.

Overall the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Revise policies by:
 - updating the Assessment policy and developing a Spiritual and Moral Policy.
- Continue to develop formal reporting to parents on Religious Education by:
 - including Religious Education as the lead subject;
 - including indications of successes for attainment levels achieved.
- Maximise learning by:
 - developing Information Communication Technology.
- Further challenge more able children by:
 - developing detailed responses for Levels 4 and 5 attainment targets.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' achievements in Religious Education are outstanding. On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is above average. Pupils make above average progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate levels for their age and stage of development in each key stage. Pupils' standard in their ability to reflect on meaning is a strength of the school. Pupils' standards show very good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education, particularly when targeting lower levels. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are very good.

Pupils are becoming increasingly more literate. 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 are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is outstanding as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. Throughout the school, progression was evident and at times learning and progress was challenging. A range of creative and quality learning was observed at each phase and children were keen to complete tasks. For example, exemplary challenges were presented to children when posed with searching questions about the Holy Spirit. The children were guided to respond spiritually, whilst invited to use previous knowledge and understanding in their conclusions.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution and are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of St Bernadette's. Pupils' have a great sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school by being a living example of their Mission Statement, by *'Growing together in Faith, Love and Learning.'* Pupils are considerate and caring of others both in school and the wider community. For example, pupils raise funds for CAFOD, HCPT, and Nugent Care. Children's fundraising is proudly displayed throughout the school. They reach out to the wider communities by inviting the community to share in their *'Growing Together'* celebrations. Children have led a Remembrance Celebration in the local park which was highly praised by members of the local community. Pupils benefit from participation in away days and retreat activities, for example, Year 6 children regularly attend Low Bank Ground in Coniston and there are plans to develop a spiritual retreat for Year 4 children. Pupils' also enjoy taking part in sporting activities and tournaments. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. In discussions with Year 6 pupils they showed the importance of forgiveness and receiving forgiveness. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. They praise and acknowledge the contribution of others. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.

Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in the schools Collective Worship. They are becoming increasingly more confident preparing and leading worship from their earliest years and are very proud of their achievements. As a

part of their Mission Statement, pupils are asked to *'reflect on and thank God'*. This was evident in their worship and within evidence books. They act with reverence and are keen to participate and lead worship. They are familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures. They sing joyfully and use singing as a call to gathering for worship. They reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. Pupils' have been encouraged and have been shown excellent examples to ensure their actions, delivery of worship and resources used are of a high standard. Pupils' know that they are progressing in their Collective Worship and are keen to grow in their reflections. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. No-one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show mutual respect.

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 	2
<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	1
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 is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress. Planning is detailed and improvements have been made across year groups. Planning includes driver words, continuous assessment, home and school links, differentiation and teachers show awareness of pupils' prior learning. There is a good awareness by teachers of reflection and contemplation levels. Children with special needs and gifted and talented children are planned for. The quality of the planning ensures that work consolidates, builds and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding. Continuing these good standards will ensure comprehensive coverage of the Religious Education Programme and equip teachers for the new Religious Education Programme, Come and See.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of time and resources. For example, the pupils' were taught about the events of Holy Week and Easter, through a variety of planned events. The events were varied and reflected Scripture in ways that enabled all children to deepen their understanding. The events were recorded in a very high quality log book that is an excellent resource showing memorable and stimulating teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils. Pupils were observed making good use of space, creating a drama and freeze frames depicting the coming of the Holy Spirit, allowing time to reflect on the event. Teaching assistants engage pupils with enthusiasm and ensure all pupils create quality work and extend their knowledge and understanding. Teaching is effective and teachers work hard to make creative ways to stimulate learning. Information Communication Technology was used in some lessons through the use of Interactive Whiteboards. Further developments in using technology effectively will maximise

learning. Teachers are positive to the children and they are rewarded and praised throughout lessons. Achievement and effort are celebrated. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss their work. They are affirmed and know how well they are doing. Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve orally. Learning objectives are clear to the children. Opportunities for children to develop their own progress within lessons and evaluate their successes were evident in some year groups. Consistency in assessment for learning will continue to develop pupils' learning and teachers' planning and marking. Marking is positive and encouraging. By using assessment for learning, teachers will be able to set more challenges and next steps.

The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is good. The school has good assessment strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. Teachers are able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle underachievement. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance and show good judgements for levels. Further challenges for higher level children will provide more detailed responses needed to achieve higher level attainment targets. Assessment information is collated by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents. Parents receive a formal report at the end of each year. The school is evaluating ways to inform parents of pupils' successes within Religious Education.

The curriculum is good in meeting pupils' needs. 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. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils learning. Curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. The school has a creative curriculum that extends Religious Education and Spiritual and Moral Development, for example, through Design Technology, Art and Drama, Christian Meditation. The school community takes pride in working together, for example, during Mission and Easter weeks. Family groups work together, reinforcing learning from older pupils to younger pupils. A parent questionnaire stated, *'The children enjoy an enriched religious curriculum not only through Religious Education lessons but a wide range of additional experiences.'* Opportunities provided for spiritual growth is a strength of the school, providing an enriching and creative curriculum. Continuing their enriched activities, St Bernadette's is currently in the final stages of building a Nurture Room, Chapel and Spiritual Garden.

The Collective Worship provided is outstanding in reflecting the Catholic character of the school. Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. Children are enabled to pray formally and informally. The school provides opportunities and sets excellent examples for staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship by having high expectations of quality resources, inspiring

focus tables, themes set over the year and steps for continuous improvements. The teachers provide opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. Opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Here I Am' programme and the Church's liturgical year. Class masses are held and there is a rota for each class to attend a weekday mass alongside the local community.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
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	1

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

Leaders and managers are good in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show a good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the Schools own Mission Statement, '*Growing Together in Faith, Love and Learning*'. Since the last inspection, all who form part of the school community including parents, Parish Priest, governors and children were involved in the development and review 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 entrance proclaims St Bernadette's mission. It is evident in all they do throughout the school from the environment, work and relationships. Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school. For example, the school held a School Family Camp, bringing together staff, children and parents, promoting their togetherness. One teacher has written a School Mission hymn that is sung at celebrations. The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and outlining areas for development. Throughout the Self Evaluation Document areas of development and improvement are repeated throughout, showing how their realistic challenges will impact across many areas of Catholic life. The school provides good induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it. All teaching staff have a Catholic Certificate in Religious Education. Topic days provided by Christian Education are attended. The leaders and managers welcome what staff need for their continuing professional development.

Leaders and managers are good in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. The leadership team tracks the impact of Religious Education through learning walks, lesson observations, and child interviews and staff audits. Formal assessment levels are tracked throughout the school and they are at the beginning stages of moderating levels of attainment and collating data. Improvements to the planning format are enabling the leadership team to evaluate effectiveness and

are in the process of developing assessment for learning consistently in Religious Education. There is good documentation that guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. The leadership team are aware that updates are needed in the Assessment Policy. A policy for Spiritual and Moral development would highlight the strengths and commitment St Bernadette's shows. The subject leader has been in post since September 2011. The subject leader has a very good understanding in how to implement changes and has excellent subject knowledge. She guides Religious Education using the strengths of the school community around her. She is aware of the many gifts that teachers and teaching assistants have and uses them to impact on the Religious Education curriculum but also on the creative enriching experiences provided for the pupils. She shows commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. The subject leader sets a high standard and this is evident from her inspiring displays, focus areas and ability to guide children through challenging areas of the Religious Education curriculum. Examples set are a strong foundation for future improvements.

Governors are good in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. There are good communication links and regular reports are given to Governors concerning updates and initiatives for Religious Education. The Governors are guided by and live out the schools Mission Statement and were fully involved in its review. They ensure the high profile of the Catholic character of the school by ensuring parishioners invited onto the Governing Body live out their faith by supporting the school. The Governors are involved in the schools development plans and evaluation documents and actively set priorities for improvements. The Governors and leadership team are very thankful for the chair of Governors qualities, commitment in guiding the Governors and for being a consistent support to all at St Bernadette's.

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects all in the school community. There are positive relationships at every level within the school. Leaders and managers facilitate pupils' involvement in service to the local faith and religious communities by inviting parents, friends and visitors to take part in '*Growing Together*' celebrations. The pupils take part in regular Christian Meditation sessions that supports skills for Collective Worship. The school works closely with parish catechists; preparing the children for the Sacrament of Initiation. Parish members are welcomed in school to support reading sessions. Representatives of charities regularly visit pupils about their fundraising efforts and for example, the school raises funds for nearby Wigan and Leigh Hospice. Some children have had the opportunity to be a part of Easter Pilgrimages with HCPT and have led assemblies about their visits. Dialogue and collaboration is encouraged with people who hold different beliefs and values. As part of other religions, members of Manchester's Islamic Community have worked with pupils in school. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions such as Judaism and Islam. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. There is a '*Friends of St Bernadette's*' group who organise events and raise funds for the school and parents are encouraged and welcomed to be a part of this group. All feedback from the parents' questionnaires was positive.

Many parents commented about St Bernadette's. *'Staff and teachers promote a caring, stable environment for my children.'* *'As a parent I have valued taking part in Collective Worship and activity days, allowing us to explore our faith together.'* *'Amazing Holy Week activities!'*

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	2
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
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	1