



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

PENKETH

Tuesday 10 February 2009

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mrs. Dorothy Martin

URN 111373

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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| Type of School | Catholic Primary |
| Age range of pupils | 4 -11 |
| Number on roll | 315 |
| Chair of Governors | Mr. Denis Povey |
| School address | Walton Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 2AU. |
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| E-mail address | stjosephs_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk |
| Date of last inspection | 14 February 2006 |
| Headteacher | Mr. Alan Saunders |

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.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated on the outskirts of Warrington. It is oversubscribed and is one of two schools which serve the local parish of St. Joseph's, Penketh. The area served by the school is of relatively high social advantage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals and the number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most learners are White British and none of the few children from minority ethnic backgrounds is at an early stage of learning English. Children enter the school with skills that are typical for their age. There are 315 children on roll, 314 of who are baptised Catholics. One child is from another Christian denomination. There are 14 members of staff. Eleven members of staff are Catholic. Nine of the twelve teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification. Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant changes in leadership. A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education coordinator were appointed in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness of the school

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary is an outstanding school. It is a caring, inclusive community, underpinned by a very strong Catholic ethos where all "are learning, growing, belonging, happy together in God's family". It enables children "to achieve their maximum potential". This establishes a very positive climate for work. The leadership and management are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. Living the values of Jesus, especially "love, care and respect" are at the heart of this community. Positive relationships have been established by working in genuine partnership with home, parish and the local community. Standards are outstanding. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching and learning is outstanding overall. Assessment is good and is beginning to provide clear guidance on learning. The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education subject leader, supported by the headteacher, provides outstanding leadership and support to staff. The governors discharge their responsibilities in an outstanding manner. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make an outstanding contribution to this. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. This is evident by the links fostered with the parish and both the local and wider community.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The school had no key issues from its last Section 23 Inspection in February 2006. Since then, the Mission Statement has been formally reviewed by the whole school community and a children's motto has been added. Formal assessment of Religious Education has been introduced and the information is beginning to be used to inform future planning and teaching. A new Religious Education coordinator has been appointed and has been given opportunity to attend in-service to help her develop her role. Time and finance have also been provided to enable staff, on a rota basis, attend topic days. In-service has been provided to further develop teachers' understanding of *Here I Am*, Collective Worship and prayer. A whole school planner for Collective Worship has been introduced. Documentation to support delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship has been updated. Policies to support children's spiritual and moral development, together with practical guidelines, have been developed. Parents/carers are given information about what is taught in Religious Education and are invited to participate in celebrations. Resources have been updated. Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are evaluated on a regular basis by staff and governors.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive and its view of its overall performance is mostly accurate. During inspection it has been judged higher in a few areas. When updating the self-evaluation the development strategies and the projected timescale, to address areas highlighted by the monitoring process, need to be more precise. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and will be influenced by the findings of this inspection. The leadership has a very clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is fully committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity and eagerness for further improvement.

Grade 1:

What the school should do to improve further

- Share good practice through the monitoring process to raise standards further;
- continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation documentation.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but, overall is about that expected nationally. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most learners, in relation to their capability and starting points, make outstanding progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education are outstanding overall. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by other adults and differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. Good use of challenging questions and tasks is made to enable more able children fulfil their potential. The school checks on the progress made by all children through good use of assessment. Children's work is marked with positive, and in some classes, challenging comments. The ongoing use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and the scrutiny of the formal assessments will enable the school to raise standards further. Children are confident in discussion and feedback and have a good knowledge of the subject and its relevance to their lives. They show enthusiasm for Religious Education while undertaking their work. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. The children are enabled to make a good contribution to the school community e. g. School Council, Buddy System etc.

Grade 1:

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The evidence in workbooks and the observation on the day of inspection show that teaching and learning is outstanding overall. Eight outstanding lessons were observed on the day of inspection. In all classes lessons are well planned taking account of the needs of different learners within the class. Teaching is focussed on the learning objective to enable children to fully understand the purpose of the lesson. Teaching is confident and use is made of a variety of resources to challenge and stimulate all learners. The learning needs of all children, including those who are more able, are addressed through use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Challenging, differentiated questions and tasks for the more able and good support, for those less able, ensures that all children are enabled to make progress and achieve their potential. The work given enables the children to work well independently and collaboratively. Outstanding use is made of keywords to develop children's religious literacy e.g. exploring what "gathering" and "communion" mean.

Learning is summed up very effectively during the plenary session and related to the objective. In many classes children are also given time to reflect in order to relate their learning to their everyday lives. In a few classes the pacing of the lesson needs to be faster. The learning environment throughout the school is creative and stimulating and *Here I Am* displays are used very effectively to support teaching and learning. A good introduction to formal assessment has been made. This enables the school to identify the progress being made in Religious Education. Teachers have begun to make good use of this information to inform their planning and enable them to meet the varying needs of all learners. Further analysis of formal assessment, by the Religious Education coordinator and leadership team, will highlight what the school needs to do to improve standards further. Parents' and carers' involvement in their children's Religious Education is outstanding. They are sent a *Here I Am* newsletter each term which gives them detailed information about the topics being studied. They also support children with homework e.g. responding to a child's questionnaire during the 'communion' topic. This enables them to become involved in their children's Religious Education. Parents/carers are also invited to celebrations. They receive regular verbal and written reports of their child's progress.

Grade: 1

Curriculum

The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of all learners. Through use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies, together with differentiated tasks, the needs of all children are met. Those children who are less able are very well supported in all classes. The good practice of challenging the more able through questioning and tasks enables them to achieve their full potential.

Through using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese the school 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 diocesan requirements. Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership of the school ensures that quality time is given to the positioning of Religious Education on timetables. Children are given opportunity to apply their learning to their own lives e.g. "how can we live in friendship?" The use of role play, music, information communication technology and other creative activities enrich the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum.

The parish of St. Joseph's makes an outstanding contribution to the Religious Education curriculum e.g. parishioners coming in during topics to talk about their role in the Church community, the priest and parish deacon supporting classes during role play of baptism and showing them the books used in Church etc. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a good sense of right and wrong and are given opportunities during topics to develop this e.g. 'how can we be the kind of friends Jesus asked us to be?' etc. The school has policies to support spiritual and moral development and these are very obviously being lived out in the daily life of the school.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a very clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards. The new Religious Education coordinator, supported by the new headteacher, who was previously the coordinator, provides outstanding leadership for the staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She shows a genuine enthusiasm for her role and is fully committed to her role. She has worked hard to ensure that all new initiatives have been introduced. An outstanding handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Coordinators' meetings are attended on a regular basis and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Staff are also given opportunity to attend topic days to support them in their planning and delivery of Religious Education.

Performance in Religious Education is monitored on a rota basis through scrutiny of planning, workbooks and assessment, observation of lessons, questioning of learners and monitoring of displays. This enables the school to share good practice and further raise standards. St. Joseph's' is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Of the 12 staff teaching Religious Education 9 have a

suitable qualification. Other adults are planned for and are involved in supporting teaching and learning during lessons. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects and resources have been purchased. Governors discharge their responsibilities in an outstanding manner and are very involved in the life of the school. The governing body have appointed a link governor who has been involved in the monitoring process and keeps the governing body fully informed of the strengths and areas for development relating to Religious Education.

Grade: 1

Catholic Life of the School

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Joseph's is a place in which the values of Jesus especially "love, care and respect" are at the heart of the community.

Since the last inspection all members of the school community have been involved in a formal review of the Mission Statement. This ensures that all members of the school community have ownership of the Mission Statement. The statement has clear aims and practical objectives which show how the mission is being lived out in the daily life of the school. The Mission Statement is displayed in all classrooms and around the school. The children's motto 'learning, growing, belonging: happy together in God's family' ensures that they all feel part of the community of St. Joseph's. During inspection one class were exploring the meaning of "Communion" and related their motto to it. The Mission Statement informs all school policies and plans. It is recommended that, at the next full review a more concise statement is produced. Regular reviews of the Mission Statement, with its clear aims and practical guidelines, enables the governors and staff to effectively monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, whole school or key stage gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. An outstanding policy gives clear guidelines to support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place. Teachers and children plan and deliver Collective Worship. The school has developed a planning format to ensure that all Collective Worship is an enriching experience.

Parents/carers are invited to participate in celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer, scripture, power-point presentations, reflection, joyful singing and other elements that support liturgical formation. Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Collective Worship observed was outstanding. Children and

adults actively participate in acts of worship. In some classes they are also given quality time for reflection at the end of Religious Education lessons. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1

Community Cohesion

The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. Leadership at all levels respects difference and values diversity. Equal opportunities are ensured through provision of a challenging Religious Education curriculum which meets the needs of all learners.

Parents and carers are involved in decision-making and the life of the school. They are invited to celebrations, receive regular newsletters and have opportunities to share their views e.g. questionnaires. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education programme, *Here I Am*, provides outstanding support to community cohesion. Learners have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. This has been greatly enhanced by the contribution made by visitors from *Other Faiths* and by visits to places of worship. St. Joseph's has very strong links with the local and wider community e. g. the parishioners supporting *Here I Am* topics, Year 6 links with the Peace Centre, Advent lunchtime prayer sessions with the Methodists, carol concert in church, visits to residential homes, partner school in Uganda etc.

The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of local and global charities e.g. CAFOD, Nugent Care, St Rocco's Hospice, Shoebox Appeal etc.

Grade: 1