



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. BASIL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WIDNES

Inspection Date 9th May 2018

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty
Mrs. Jude Ryan, Mr. Barry Broderick

Unique Reference Number 111390

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 4 - 11

Number on roll 374

Chair of Governors Christine Wilson

Headteacher Angela Sheppard

School address Hough Green Road
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Date of last inspection 25th June 2013

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Information about this school

- St Basil's School is a larger than average sized Catholic primary school situated in the Halton area of the Archdiocese, serving the parish of St Wilfrid's, Widnes.
- There are 374 children on roll of whom 161 are baptised Catholic, 96 come from other Christian denominations and 117 have no religious affiliation. There are no pupils from another faith or religious tradition at the school.
- There are 18 teachers at the school, 10 of whom are baptised Catholic. Sixteen teachers teach Religious Education. Six teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education 2 are undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- There has been a considerable turnover of staff 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

St. Basil's is a good school in providing Catholic Education. It has some outstanding features.

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.
- They appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They understand the sentiments of their Mission Statement, *'In God's love, we learn and succeed by sharing and caring together'*, and know that it means they are learning to love God and each other in all they do especially through the Gospel values of love and forgiveness.
- 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. They show an understanding of the need to forgive and be forgiven. They recognise the difference between right and wrong and appreciate the need for school and class rules and strive to keep them. On the day of inspection, Year 2 pupils, at their interview, were able to talk about rewards and sanctions for behaviour and clearly understood the consequences of poor behaviour. Children in Year 4 were investigating the rules needed for a variety of situations. It was clear that they knew the reasons for having rules and why there are consequences when rules are broken.
- 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 are aware of the needs of others and seek justice for others within and beyond the school community. They take their roles of responsibility very seriously and enjoy their work as councillors, play leaders, house captains, prayer partners etc.
- Pupils value and participate in opportunities provided by the school, such as visits, visitors and residential opportunities. All Key Stage 2 pupils are given opportunities for outdoor learning and the development of the arts. This brings new experiences and cohesiveness to relationships. Various art projects e.g. the depiction of Gospel values and the Creation story, undertaken by pupils, often under the direction of an artist, enhance the Catholic Life of the school as they are displayed proudly and prominently around the school.
- Pupils show empathy and concern for the less fortunate in their enthusiastic support of a range of good causes and charities such as Nugent, Children in Need, Macmillan Cancer Support and CAFOD. They have collected food for a local food bank thus showing God's love in a tangible way to the needy. Pupils across the school, especially the Mini Vinnies, are able to reflect on their lives and form opinions about justice and fairness. They are becoming globally aware citizens, with a strong commitment to the common good, who understand they can have a positive impact on the lives of others.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. Pupils enjoy a wide range of after school clubs including sports, music, cookery etc. They have thoroughly enjoyed and gained much from visits by theatre groups that have worked with the children on a variety of themes. As a result, they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.
- Year 6 pupils undertake a Lenten retreat to Lowe House, 'Living the Christian Life'.

- Appropriate to their age and capability, pupils have a good understanding of loving relationships within the context of a Christian understanding.
- They 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. The school choir, for example, has performed across the community for a number of events including at local nursing homes.
- Pupils are very supportive towards their peers and are proud to show love and respect to each other.
- They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish and the Archdiocese. As a result, they respect and are involved with parish and diocesan celebrations and activities, irrespective of their own faith commitments.
- Pupils feel able to express a pride in their own religious and cultural identity and beliefs and celebrate each other's.

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 is reviewed annually and clearly expresses the educational mission of the Church. Gospel values are readily shared and promoted.
- Staff members are committed to implementing the mission across the curriculum and the whole of school life. They participate in school activities which reflect the Catholic Life and mission of the school and consider prayer to be central to the whole community.
- The school environment reflects its ethos and identity through obvious signs of its Catholic character. Beautiful displays of a Christian nature grace the walls all around the school and devotional areas provide pupils with opportunities for personal reflection. Both school halls have wonderful artwork displayed on the walls. In the infant hall is the story of Creation. This has been produced with the help of an artist in residence. In the junior hall, a CAFOD inspired montage runs across one wall and promotes Catholic Social Teaching under the heading of '*Live simply so others can simply live*'. This was undertaken with the children in Year 5 during a day at the Tattenhall Centre as part of a topic entitled, 'Are we damaging our world?'
- Staff members promote high standards of behaviour and are excellent role models of mutual respect and forgiveness for pupils. Following on from the school's new policy, rooted in Gospel values, and rules for behaviour, all classes worked to create their individual class charters. Children are taught to consider others, demonstrate good manners and display positive attitudes whilst endeavouring to do their best. Consequently, they take responsibilities for their actions from an early age.
- There is a clear sense of inclusivity and community. The school promotes love and forgiveness for all. This is clearly evident in the excellent relationships that exist within most classes. Staff members actively promote and teach the importance of love, respect and reconciliation which includes justice and fairness for all.
- There is a strong emphasis on spiritual and moral, social and cultural development of pupils enabling the children to feel of worth and to understand their identity. The children find their 'House Days' enjoyable and have the opportunity to join with other phases to learn about a theme identified from the school's spiritual moral and cultural values.
- The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor who is known and loved by the whole school community. He is highly supportive of the school's Catholic Life.
- Policies and structures are in place, which provide pastoral care to pupils and their families, and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice. All are nurtured and listened to. A learning mentor provides a supportive environment for vulnerable pupils to feel loved and cared for.

- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationships and Sex Education are planned, well taught and reflect Catholic teachings and principles.

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 are deeply committed to the mission of the Church. They are regarded as excellent models of Catholic leadership. The development of the Catholic Life of the school is viewed by leaders and governors as a core leadership responsibility.
- The Mission Statement is highly visible and is displayed around the school, in every classroom and work-base. It is also printed along with the school badge on pupils' workbooks.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of the school's Catholic Life has continued to grow. This has resulted in a vibrant and stimulating learning environment that fully embraces and truly reflects the school's Christian nature and enriches pupils' spiritual experiences. The environment is well-kept and stimulating both inside and outside the building. A recent addition to it is the beautiful prayer garden dedicated to Our Lady.
- The school's self-evaluation, which involves rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge, leads to planned improvements to further enhance the Catholic Life of the school.
- The development of the general school curriculum has been a recent key priority. Teachers have identified the values which underpin learning and opportunities to develop Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education. Leaders have plotted these strategically and as a consequence, pupils are increasingly able to identify and relate Gospel values to their learning and everyday life.
- Leaders promote values, virtues and ethics that shape pupils' character and moral perspective through the teachings of the Church. They have mapped out their curriculum in Relationships and Sex Education and personal development to promote this. The use of *Philosophy for Children* further develops pupils' understanding and application of Gospel values, equality and diversity as well as social justice.
- Continuous Professional Development focusing on the Catholic Life of the school occurs and is effective. As a result, staff members' understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. Staff members are involved in shaping and supporting it.
- The school has very good strategies for engaging with parents/carers to the benefit of pupils, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. As a result, parents/carers have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are supportive of it. The school website, Facebook and Twitter pages along with regular newsletters keep families conversant with the Catholic Life of the school. Parents' views are sought and considered regularly.
- As leaders, the governing board is ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in the way it emphasises Catholic Life as a school improvement priority. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are dedicated to the school's mission, are involved in its evaluation. They play a strategic and active role in the development of the school, are extremely committed to their roles and provide clear direction and appropriate challenge.
- All policies associated with the Catholic Life of the school are reviewed regularly by the governors' Faith and Community Committee. Members of this committee have also undertaken learning walks to monitor the distinctive nature of the school's learning environment and held pupil interviews about the school's Catholic Life.

- The school responds well to Archdiocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Archdiocesan vision throughout the school. In response to the Year of Mercy, the whole school visited the Metropolitan Cathedral and celebrated Mass there.

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 good.
- On entry to the school, children have varied knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and a wide range of religious experiences. They make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- 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 becoming increasingly more religiously literate and engaged young people who use their knowledge, understanding and skills, to reflect spiritually, and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, pupils are more 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, in order to further develop as competent learners.
- They concentrate hard; have an understanding of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve. They can articulate how they have made progress.
- Pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy challenging activities, and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. Behaviour for learning in most lessons is excellent because pupils enjoy Religious Education and disruptions in lessons are unusual.
- Pupils work eagerly at their tasks collaborating and co-operating well with each other. They listen respectfully to each other and willingly share their views and opinions. On the day of inspection, inspectors witnessed this as they heard good debates and discussions being held in a very considerate manner.
- Pupils' attainment, as indicated by teacher assessment, is good. Pupils achieve at least average attainment with many better, and this is an improving trend.
- The quality of pupils' current work, both in class and in written work is excellent. Pupils take pride in their work and endeavour to present it very neatly.
- Each child has an assessment book which follows them throughout their school life. These clearly show the progress children make over time.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education is good.
- Teachers consistently plan very good lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that pupils learn well. As a result of this, teaching is mainly very good.
- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn. Consequently, pupils apply themselves well and make excellent progress in lessons and over time.
- Relationships in most classrooms are very good and subsequently positive climates for learning exist, thus enabling pupils to enjoy and engage in their lessons.
- Teachers employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. As a consequence, pupils are motivated and concentrate well in lessons.

- Teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to their excellent progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- Time is managed extremely well to secure learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons. On the day of inspection, pace was swift and there was no time slippage.
- Teachers use observations and questions to assess learning during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, so improving opportunities for pupils. They make skilful use of questions to probe for the best answers for the children to share.
- Good quality resources, including other adults, are used very effectively to optimise learning for pupils. Good use is made of Information and Communication Technology to stimulate pupils' imagination and enable them to undertake research.
- Teachers communicate ambition and high expectations for Religious Education to their pupils, all of whom respond positively. Most teachers consistently make very good use of praise and affirmation to encourage good work, attitude and behaviour.
- Many links are made during lessons to the Gospel values of love and forgiveness and to the school rules – be respectful, be proud and be safe.
- *Philosophy for Children* techniques are deployed effectively during lessons to encourage children to reflect on their life and work.
- Working walls and displays are attractive and are used very well to support learning.
- Excellent quality feedback, often linked to the Learning Challenge, leads to the engagement, interest, achievement and progress of pupils. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond and this improves their understanding of how to improve.
- Pupils think that teachers work hard and include 'fun activities' into their lessons for them to enjoy.
- The 'Driver Words' from the current *Levels of Attainment in Religious Education* are used extremely effectively in planning, questioning and in tasks given to pupils. This is a big improvement since the last inspection and has had a significant impact on standards. Teachers' planning now consistently indicates how work is differentiated to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Formal assessments are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan expectations. Work is levelled and moderated by staff. Progress is tracked over time so underachievement can be identified, carefully monitored and challenged.
- Many school clubs and extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum and enable the children to flourish.
- Visitors of other faiths and religions are used well to widen children's experiences.
- Priests from the parish have also supported the curriculum at key points throughout the year e.g. by speaking about their vocation.
- Achievement and effort are often celebrated through displays and rewards leading to high levels of motivation from the pupils. Wonderful class floor-books provide a wealth of rich evidence which show the breadth of pupils' learning experiences over time. They are a joy to see and a real credit to those who have produced them.

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. They ensure it is the core subject in the school.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education is given the highest precedence within the curriculum and make certain that the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.

- They ensure that the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage.
- Achievement in and teaching of Religious Education is given the highest priority. The Religious Education action plan is robust and its impact is appraised regularly in the light of any monitoring and evaluation. It forms a significant part of the school development plan.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, in terms of professional development, resourcing, staffing and accommodation.
- New teachers are inducted into the school and supported by the subject leaders. All staff members have continuing professional development in the subject as necessary.
- Any additional requirements and policies of the Archdiocese regarding the Religious Education curriculum are fully implemented.
- Planning, children's work and teaching and learning are regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure quality provision. Appropriate steps are taken to secure improvements. A close scrutiny is kept on those children who have been identified as underachieving.
- The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders and governors is an excellent 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 at least good outcomes in Religious Education.
- The subject leaders for Religious Education are enthusiastic and passionate about the subject. They have 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 very good. Their monitoring files show exemplary practice. The subject leaders liaise with the link governor for Religious Education and report to the governors' Faith and Community Committee on a regular basis.
- An excellent subject handbook guides and directs staff in Religious Education and is reviewed annually.
- Each term, parents and carers are sent Religious Education newsletters informing them of forthcoming topics and events. These indicate how they can work with the school in support of their children's learning.
- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education is well planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils and to secure coherence across different year groups and key stages.

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 good.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship. Given the opportunity, they sing joyfully, reflect quietly and join in prayer appropriately and with confidence. They regularly participate enthusiastically and give mature responses.
- Pupils often prepare worship with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence in an age appropriate manner. They are thoughtful in their planning of liturgy especially during the *Rejoice* part of their work in *Come and See*.
- Pupils are becoming more adept in using different prayer styles which include scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music, and other forms of prayer, both traditional and contemporary. Pupils in Year 6 and in Reception love to join with their prayer partners for prayer and worship.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts and the approaches this requires in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities.

- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community makes a significant and growing contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background.
- Pupils 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 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 is given a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experience of Collective Worship is engaging and members of the community speak positively about these opportunities.
- Collective Worship has a purpose, message and direction. The themes chosen for worship reflect a very good perception of the liturgical seasons and the Catholic character of the school.
- Relevant staff members have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and ensure that pupils have memorable experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Staff members ensure that children have opportunities to pray, celebrate, reflect, question, give thanks, make choices and repent at appropriate times.
- Many beautiful devotional areas around the school provide opportunities for personal reflection. Modern, suitable artefacts provide a focus to enhance worship.
- A variety of stimuli are used to engage pupils e.g. music is used effectively to create a calm, peaceful atmosphere for prayer.
- Staff members are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship when appropriate. They have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Opportunities are planned in a manner that facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and school and response to this invitation is good. Year group and class Masses are celebrated throughout the year with good support from families. Parents and carers report that they are proud of their children and are moved by the experience of Collective Worship they have shared in.

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 provide excellent policies and guidelines for planning and delivering quality Collective Worship.
- Leaders have prepared a comprehensive programme for Collective Worship showing they have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and how to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context. The liturgical calendar is reflected through Collective Worship, Masses, services or assemblies e.g. Advent service, Stations of the Cross etc. Masses and assemblies are celebrated at key times in the school year e.g. Year 6 Leavers' Mass, Year 4 celebration Mass, Ash Wednesday service etc.
- Leaders of Collective Worship within the school are excellent models of practice for staff and pupils.

- They promote pupils' planning of Collective Worship and enable pupils to deliver parts of worship in an appropriate manner e.g. through reading scripture, role play and leading prayers.
- Collective Worship is well-resourced. There are suitable focal areas in all classrooms and devotional displays around the school. Class worship boxes have been prepared with appropriate modern artefacts etc.
- Copies of the *Wednesday Word* are used effectively by leaders to share the Gospel message in keeping with the Church's liturgical year.
- Leaders offer regular professional development of staff incorporating liturgical formation and the planning for Collective Worship. Support is provided as necessary and good practice shared across the school.
- Collective Worship across the school has been monitored and evaluated by leaders and governors who subsequently provided feedback for staff and gave guidance and support where necessary.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation processes.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document.
- Improve the Catholic Life of the school by:
 - reviewing the Mission Statement to give clarity to how the aims that emanate from the statement are lived out in the day to day life of the school.
- Further develop Collective Worship by:
 - continuing to develop teachers' skills in planning and delivering worship so they in turn can further develop the children's leadership skills;
 - providing a more spiritual experience for all present by ensuring time is consistently given during worship for personal reflection and communal prayer.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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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	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	2
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	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
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