



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. BASIL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WIDNES

Inspection Date 25 June 2013

Inspectors Mrs. Pat Peel
Mrs. Trish Deus Mrs. Maria McGarry

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 360

Chair of Governors Mr. Mike Findlater

Headteacher Mrs. Win Douglas

School address Hough Green Road
Widnes
Cheshire
WA8 4SZ

Telephone number 0151 424 7839

E-mail address sec.stbasils@halton.gov.uk

Date of last inspection 22 February 2011

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 is a larger than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Hough Green, Widnes serving the parish of St. Basil and All Saints.
- There are 360 children on roll of whom 240 are baptised Catholic, 117 come from other Christian denominations, and 3 from another faith or religious tradition.
- There are 19 teachers of whom 18 teach Religious Education and 16 have a suitable qualification in Religious Education. Thirteen teachers are baptised Catholic.
- Since the last inspection the school has appointed another Assistant Headteacher and a Religious Education subject leader.

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.

Inspection Judgements

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 at St. Basil's.
- Pupils understand the school's Mission Statement "Caring and Sharing" and are involved in shaping the Catholic character of the school by showing an excellent commitment to living it out on a daily basis.
- Pupils have an outstanding sense of belonging to the school. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members of the school community.
- The school's mission and ethos permeates the environment from the entrance porch through to every classroom. It creates a vibrant and stimulating celebration of pupils work and is testament to their lived experiences.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility by becoming councillors, house captains and playground buddies.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities for example CAFOD, Comic Relief and Operation Christmas Child to name but a few and outreach to the local community through undertaking a collection of groceries in aid of the parish Food Bank.
- Through the house point system named after Saints George, Andrew, Patrick and David, pupils and staff are encouraged to undertake charitable works and plan Feast Day celebrations together.
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential outdoor activities. Year 5 pupils visit the Conway Arts and Education Centre, Menai, Anglesey and Year 6 pupils visit Robinwood Activity Centre, Todmorden.
- Education for pastoral care and personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils. SEAL and Seasons for Growth is used effectively to support this. Pupils benefit from an extremely caring and supportive environment.
- Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other's achievements at their weekly assemblies.
- They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences through participation in liturgical events in school and in the parish.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local Faith and religious communities by becoming altar servers, taking part in parish liturgies and choral events, the immediate neighbourhood served by the school i.e collecting food for the Food Bank and outreach in the wider community through fundraising for numerous charitable events. They show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions.

- The school shares many joint ecumenical links with All Saints Church of England Primary School through their shared church and local community. This is a real strength and celebration.
- The school has developed strong links with the local high school and the chaplain is a frequent visitor to the school.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment in Religious Education is good.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good. This is due to the support given by teaching assistants which is both practical and pastoral.
- Assessments undertaken to date and scrutiny of their work provides evidence of pupils generally attaining a broadly average level for their age and stage of development.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing. Activities such as think, pair, and share are used effectively
- Pupils are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Pupils' engagement in their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and exemplary behaviour in lessons. This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils work well independently, in pairs and collaboratively in small groups.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils are outstanding in responding to and participating in Collective Worship.
- They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing and they are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles.
- Pupils' liturgical formation is highly developed across the school and they talk about their celebrations at Mass which they thoroughly enjoy.
- They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. The parish curate has worked with the school to provide musical support to enable pupils' to play a fuller part in liturgical celebrations.
- Pupils appreciate and are open to the Word of God in scripture. Some children are involved in planning, preparing and leading worship however the school recognises this needs to be further developed and cascaded down throughout all the year groups.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- Teacher's planning is good in meeting the needs of all the pupils. On the day of inspection teacher's planned high quality learning experiences for all pupils that encapsulated the richness of the Come and See programme. However, evidence in books shows that there needs to be a greater emphasis on differentiation by task rather than outcomes which is the norm.

- Teachers displayed very good subject knowledge of the Universal Church Theme and deployed a range of teaching strategies to enrich pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for Religious Education.
- Teachers always take into account pupils' prior learning but this needs to be enhanced further by employing a range of differentiated tasks which consolidate, build on and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Good and imaginative use is made of resources and technology for example, interactive white board, CAFOD materials, iPads, audio and visual media etc. to maximise learning.
- Plenary sessions ensured pupils have an opportunity to revisit the focused learning objectives, assimilate and time to evaluate what learning has taken place.
- Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons. Marking is inconsistent. The best examples inform pupils of their progress however, it does not always identify what pupils need to do next. Effort and achievement is celebrated.
- The school has implemented formal assessment tasks which provide information on the achievement of pupils. The school is currently over estimating pupils' levels of attainment but through the support of the Widnes schools moderation cluster and in house cross phase moderation this should rapidly improve. Building up a levelled portfolio of evidence will aid this process.
- The tracking of pupils' progress in Religious Education is firmly embedded in the school.
- There is evidence of pupils using a range of assessment for learning techniques across the school.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The Religious Education curriculum is good in promoting pupils' learning.
- The school using the Come and See programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. 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.
- Planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education programme. Termly newsletters are provided for parents and carers and in Year 4 the Wednesday Word is also provided. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- The parish curate has visited the school to share his vocation with the pupils in an effort to enhance the Religious Education curriculum further.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of individuals. The provision for pupils with additional needs is good and the most vulnerable pupils feel safe and well cared for in this very supportive environment.
- Pupils have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism on a rolling programme. This aspect of the curriculum is enhanced by visitors including Dennis Soloman, a practising Jew and Priti Mistri, a Hindu coming into the school. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good.
- Collective Worship plays a part in meeting the Spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community.
- Pupils are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- In some classes teachers are providing the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. However, this needs further development as teachers are currently assuming responsibility for most of what is undertaken in the school and this needs to be addressed.
- More regular monitoring of timetables must be undertaken to ensure Collective Worship is provided for all pupils across the school day and the appropriate length given. In some classes this tends to be primarily at the close of school day which is not conducive to creating quality prayerful experiences.
- Opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the Come and See programme.
- The parish curate presides at key school celebrations of Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year. He is fulsome in his praise of the Catholic ethos and mission of the school.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- They show an excellent understanding of and are deeply committed to the Mission of the Church.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in the Catholic Life and Mission of the school through prayer, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need.
- A real strength of St. Basil's is its links with local and global communities through charitable outreach i.e. supporting a teacher going to Peru, the parish 'Gift for Zambia' appeal and Mission Together work which is evident around school.
- The Self Evaluation Document is a comprehensive and realistic working document providing evidence of the schools rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. Since the last inspection the school has continued to develop the areas identified as key priorities.
- The school provides in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it for example attendance at Archdiocesan in-service 'Topic' days and subject leader briefings. They have held a well being day lead by the Lyonettes.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. An up to date policy is in place.
- A good range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for all pupils. In addition to Collective Worship opportunities are provided for staff to join in 'Come and See for Yourself' celebrations at the beginning of each new topic. The Headteacher attends the Spirituality conferences and regularly leads prayer sessions.

- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Parents are consulted regularly and they support the school in fundraising activities.
- Governors work hard to engender good relationships at every level across the school. They have a clear vision for supporting the headteacher in bringing about school improvement and raising standards.
- The school is working alongside the parish in support of the family catechesis sessions. A member of staff is involved in facilitating this.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The school has appointed a Religious Education link governor who also volunteers in school on a regular basis. This enables regular dialogue to take place between the subject leader and the various governing body committees.
- The subject leader is deeply committed in guiding Religious Education and is energised by the task. She has successfully lead the implementation of the 'Come and See' programme and all the key documentation is in place for the delivery of the subject.
- The senior leadership team supports the subject leader in undertaking rigorous monitoring, analysis and evaluation of teaching and learning in order to bring about improvement to standards in provision and outcomes for pupils.
- Formal assessment tasks are being undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Regular moderation must be undertaken to ensure judgements made are accurate and a portfolio of evidence needs to be kept and levelled to aid this process.
- Assessment information is being collated by the subject leader.
- Everyone at St Basil's understands the school's Mission. They share its purpose and are actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

What the school needs to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards of attainment in Religious Education further by:
 - planning for a range of activities which are differentiated by task rather than outcome;
 - providing a range of 'open-ended' tasks to further challenge the more able pupils;
 - adopting a consistent approach to 'next steps' marking to ensure pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of provision and outcomes for Collective Worship by:
 - enabling all pupils to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship from the earliest years;
 - evaluating Collective Worship to ensure quality, prayerful experiences.
- Further develop the work being done in assessment, monitoring and tracking of pupils progress by:
 - improving the rigour of moderation across year groups;
 - building up a portfolio of moderated work to aid accurate levelling.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	2
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OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders, governors and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	1

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, Grade 2 good, Grade 3 requires improvement and Grade 4 inadequate