



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY OF COMPASSION CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

FORMBY

Wednesday 8 June 2007

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mrs. Pat Cooney

URN 104930

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Number on roll	290
Chair of governors	Rev. Fr. Bernard Highham
School address	Bull Cop, Formby, Liverpool, L37 8BZ.
Telephone number	01704 877281
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Date of last inspection	27 November 2001
Headteacher	Mrs. Margaret Lynn

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

Our Lady of Compassion is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Formby, a residential town in Merseyside. It serves the parish of Our Lady's and St. Anne's. Very few children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of learners eligible for free school meals is low and the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Standards on entry to the nursery are in line with or better than national expectation. There are 290 children on roll of whom 284 are baptised Catholics and 6 come from an other Christian denomination. There are no children from other faith traditions. There are 14 members of staff, 11 of whom are Catholic. Three of the 14 teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness of the school

Our Lady of Compassion is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a vibrant, inclusive community underpinned by a very strong Catholic ethos where all are respected, affirmed and encouraged to live life to the full. This encourages children to flourish in all aspects of their development and establishes a very positive climate for work. Positive relationships have been established by working in genuine partnership with home, parish and the local community. Standards are good overall. Learners achieve well and make good progress. Teaching overall is outstanding. Assessment is good and provides very clear guidance on learning. The school is outstanding in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of all learners. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The Religious Education subject leader provides outstanding leadership and support to staff. The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding. This is evident through her excellent understanding of the mission of a Catholic school. She has high expectations, is aware of the school's strengths and has a clear vision of how to meet development needs.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The school had three key issues from its last Section 23 Inspection in November 2001. Each one of these has been addressed thoroughly. A new Religious Education coordinator has been appointed and has been given time to attend in-service provided by the Archdiocese in order to develop her role of leadership and management. She has provided in-service to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach to planning, delivery and assessment of Religious Education. She has ensured that all documentation has been updated in light of all new guidelines given by the Archdiocese. Time and finance have been provided for whole staff in-service. The Religious Education handbook, the Collective Worship policy and spiritual and moral policies have all been recently updated. Monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and assessment has been introduced. Parents/carers are given detailed 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.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's view of its overall performance is accurate due to its effective self-evaluation and monitoring process. 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 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

- continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation document.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school are in line with or better than those expected nationally. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Learners make good progress in the school with many children in Key Stage 2 exceeding expectation. Standards in Religious Education overall are good. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Learners with special needs make good progress in Religious Education through use of tasks suited to their needs and with the help provided by teachers and teaching assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all and gives learners clear guidance on improvement through good use of assessment and positive marking. In all key stages learners are confident in discussion and ask very good questions showing knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. Throughout the school learners' work is recorded in a variety of ways. Learners in Key Stage 2 write very well independently in a variety of styles.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual development. Children throughout the school show real enjoyment of Religious Education. They have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are given opportunity to apply his teaching to their own lives and experiences. Learning about *Other Faiths* has led children to an awareness of how other religions make sense of the world, and the need for tolerance and respect. Children's behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Achievement in all areas of school life is celebrated through a variety of systems in classes and at a weekly Award Assembly. Learners have an excellent sense of right and wrong. The Gospel values of love, respect, compassion and forgiveness clearly underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling them to make an outstanding contribution to the school community.

Grade 1:

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching overall is outstanding. Lessons are very well planned. In the majority of classes more able learners are challenged in a variety of ways and in all classes good support is given to those less able. Outstanding use is made of teaching assistants to support learners. The majority of teachers use a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies that capture and retain learners' interest and involvement. All teachers ensure that past learning is recalled, learners understand the learning objective and keywords are introduced and explained. In all classes learning is summed up very effectively during the plenary session and related to the objective and to real life. Learners are enthusiastic and show real enjoyment in Religious Education lessons. All teachers ensure that the tasks set meet the learning objective and learners are thoroughly engaged. Good use is made of homework, when relevant, to enrich learners' understanding. Regular assessment of learners' work is good. Detailed records are kept and the information is used by many teachers to inform future planning. Most teachers make outstanding use of quality display to enhance delivery of Religious Education. Teaching and learning are monitored on a regular basis and feedback given to staff. The information is used to identify in-service needs and to ensure quality delivery of Religious Education.

Each term parents and carers are sent a *Here I Am* newsletter, which gives them detailed information about the topics being studied. This enables them to become involved in their children's Religious Education through support of homework. Parents/carers are also invited to *Rejoice* 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 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. Provision is made for those learners with additional educational needs by differentiation of tasks and also by the support given. 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.

Very strong links are made with home, parish and the local community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners'

spiritual and moral development. The policies supporting the development of learners' spiritual and moral development have been recently updated and contain clear aims. It is very obvious that these are lived out in the daily life of the school. It is recommended that these practical objectives are written down and added to the policy.

Grade: 1

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on very high standards. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the leadership team, provides strong and inspirational leadership for the staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She shows a genuine enthusiasm for her role. The governors have also demonstrated their commitment to and understanding of the shared vision of the school. An excellent handbook, which has recently been updated, guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Performance in Religious Education is monitored through scrutiny of planning, workbooks and assessment, lesson observations, questioning of learners and monitoring of displays. This enables the school to share good practice and further raise standards. Our Lady of Compassion is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Of the fourteen staff teaching Religious Education three have a suitable qualification. It is recommended that those staff without a Religious Education qualification be encouraged to undertake the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* currently on offer within the Archdiocese. Teaching assistants are planned for and utilised very well during lessons. The subject leader attends coordinators' meetings and topic days. Information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects and the school is at present updating resources. The headteacher keeps governors fully informed of the strengths and areas for development relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities very effectively and are very involved in the life of the school.

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. Our Lady of Compassion is a place in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work.

The Mission Statement has clear aims, which highlight the philosophy of education in this Catholic school. It informs all school policies and plans and

is displayed around the school. Children are given regular opportunities to explore the Mission Statement and to make “being fully alive” central to all that happens within the community of Our Lady of Compassion School. Reflection on the Mission Statement and, its clear aims, provides an effective system by which to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school on a regular basis. The present statement would be enhanced by the addition of practical objectives, which show how it is so obviously lived out in the daily 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, key stage or whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

An outstanding policy, which gives very clear guidelines to support the planning and delivery of quality Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place has been developed since the last inspection. Teachers and learners plan and deliver Collective Worship. Parents/carers are invited to participate in *Rejoice* celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer and scripture, reflection and other elements that support liturgical formation. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Collective Worship observed was outstanding. Learners respond well and actively participate in acts of worship. All classes make use of quality focus tables to enhance delivery of class Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to learners’ spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 1