



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATHERTON

Tuesday 12 June 2007

Inspectors Rev. D. Melly Mrs. D. Martin

URN 106499

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	182
Chair of governors	Mrs. J. Carter
School address	Lodge Lane, Hindsford, Atherton, Manchester, M46 9BN.
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Date of last inspection	13 November 2001
Headteacher	Miss C. Morrow

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

Sacred Heart School is a smaller than average sized primary school. It is situated in Atherton and mainly serves the parish of Sacred Heart, which no longer has a church. It is part of the Wigan Local Authority. The catchment area is one of mainly terraced housing, some owner-owned, some rented. The community is one of average social and economic diversity. There are 182 learners on role of whom 162 are baptised Catholics, 19 come from other Christian denominations, 1 is from an *Other Faith* tradition. The number of learners eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 8 members of staff, 7 of whom are Catholic. Three of the teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification and a further 2 hope to begin the process of obtaining the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* in the autumn term.

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

Sacred Heart is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It is a caring, warm, supportive community, underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos, which establishes a very positive climate for work. Outstanding relationships have been established by working closely with home, parish and the local and global community. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress. Teaching is good overall. Assessment is providing good guidance on learning. The curriculum planning is good. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education programme, Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school make a very positive contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. The headteacher, and senior management team, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and a vision of how to meet development needs. Religious Education has obviously a high profile in this school.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Section 23 Inspection in November 2001 the school has taken effective steps to ensure that practical objectives for the Mission Statement have been agreed upon. Staff are given opportunities to attend topic days on *Here I Am* on a rolling programme. The *Before You Begin* section of the programme is now being used and opportunities are given for the adults to worship together.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is 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 and development plan.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is that expected of children for their age. Learners make good progress in the school and by Year 6 meet or exceed the expectations of the *Here I Am* programme. 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 with the provision of differing tasks and the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school has begun to check on the progress made by all through formal assessment and the headteacher is keen to develop this work. Learners' work is always marked with positive comments, stickers, stars etc. Learners are confident and articulate in discussion. They ask good questions which show good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. Learners are given opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding and express their own thoughts and feelings in a variety of styles. Continued monitoring of planning, teaching and learning, as well as detailed evaluation of assessment, to ensure its effectiveness, will help to further raise standards.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual development. The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. Children throughout the school show enjoyment of their work. They have a good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and His Church and are able to apply this to their own lives and experiences. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. They have a very good sense of right and wrong. The Gospel values of love, respect, honesty, truth, justice and forgiveness underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling learners to make a good contribution to the school community. Teachers and learners show genuine care and concern for each other and affirmation is used to great effect.

Grade: 2

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is good. Teaching is good overall with two examples of outstanding teaching being observed. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the programme. This lends confidence to their teaching styles and helps engage the learners to work well independently and collaboratively. Some teachers show creativity and imagination, which enables learners to respond enthusiastically. Some very good use was made of information communication technology. Good use was also made of talking partners. Tasks set were challenging enabling the children to make progress. Some differing tasks were provided to suit the needs of the learners. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of planning, lessons and learners' workbooks has been put in place. This programme of monitoring will ensure that the outstanding and

good practice observed is shared, that there is consistency in application throughout the school, and standards will be raised further. Some effective use is made of learning assistants throughout lessons. The learning objective is shared sometimes at the beginning of the lessons never revisited at the end. The highlighting of the learning objective helps maintain the sharp focus of the lesson. Learners' work is regularly assessed and records are kept in portfolios.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in a variety of ways. Newsletters are sent to the homes every week. An outline of the religious topics to be covered, together with home activity suggestions, is included for each new topic. Parents are also invited to attend school assemblies and Masses. The school also reports on progress in Religious Education at open evenings and in the formal written reports at the end of the school year.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The school is effective in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of 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. 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 and global community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding impact on learners' spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

The leadership and management in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school, which is shared by all and is reflected in the very positive relationships throughout the school. The headteacher is also the Religious Education coordinator, and is totally committed. She is making a very good contribution in leading and supporting staff. She shows enthusiasm for her role and is committed to raising standards. A very good handbook, which has recently been reviewed, guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, workbooks, teaching and learning is in place. A process of formal assessment is now in place and the headteacher is keen to develop this work with the hope that the process will further raise standards.

Sacred Heart is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Three of the seven staff teaching Religious Education have a suitable qualification and two hope to begin the process of obtaining the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* in the autumn term. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed. The headteacher attends coordinators' meetings and 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 well funded and money has obviously been well spent. The headteacher keeps governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities most effectively.

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. Sacred Heart is a place in which the Gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. A good Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place. This is due to be reviewed in the autumn term. The importance of aims, which flow from the Mission Statement and objectives, which show how the aims are to be achieved, is appreciated.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good overall with some outstanding features. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, phase or whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A very good policy and guidelines to support the planning, delivery and evaluation of Collective Worship is in place. Acts of worship are very appropriate; they include various forms of prayer, scripture that is very well used, music, enthusiastic hymn singing with instrumental accompaniment and some time for personal reflection, which is extremely well used. Learners are totally involved and participate in Acts of Worship. Focus tables, which are relevant to the current topic, enhance delivery of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children.

Grade: 1