



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. AGNES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HUYTON

Tuesday 2 October 2007

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mrs. Angela Paget

URN 104473

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	115
Chair of governors	Miss Sheila Lavin
School address	St. John's Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 OUX.
Telephone number	0151 477 8530
E-mail address	stagnes.de@knowsley.gov.uk
Date of last inspection	18 March 2003
Headteacher	Mr. P. Sherry

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. Agnes' is a smaller than average Catholic primary school situated in Huyton in the Borough of Knowsley. It serves the parish of St. Agnes and is in an area of high social deprivation and unemployment. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is well above average. Approximately 42% of children are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is much higher than the national average. Attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but overall is below national expectation. There are 115 children on roll of whom 112 are baptised Catholics and 3 come from another Christian denomination. There are no children from an *Other Faith* tradition. There are 7 members of staff, 4 of whom are Catholic. Six teachers teach Religious Education. The school has had some significant challenges in the past four years, with falling pupil numbers, long-term teacher absence and considerable changes to staffing. At present the school has an acting headteacher.

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

St. Agnes' is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It is a very inclusive caring community underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos where children are respected and affirmed. This encourages them to grow in all aspects of their development. Relationships, at all levels, are good. Standards are good overall. Learners achieve well and make good progress with some learners in Key Stage 2 exceeding expectations. Teaching is good overall with two examples of outstanding practice. Good assessment strategies are in place to assess learners' progress and inform future planning. In most classes the curriculum is well planned and owned by the school. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The quality of Collective Worship is good. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is good. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The Religious Education coordinator provides good leadership of the subject. The senior management's leadership of the school is outstanding. They have a clear understanding of the mission of a Catholic school, are aware of the school's strengths and have a vision of how to meet development needs. The governors discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last Section 23 Inspection in March 2003 the school has reviewed the Mission Statement and added clear aims and practical objectives. Children have also had opportunity to explore the Mission Statement at their level. Whole school in-service has been provided to support the ongoing development of planning, teaching and learning and assessment in line with all new guidance given by the Archdiocese. Staff have been given opportunity to attend topic days on a rota basis. The Religious Education handbook has been updated to include new assessment procedures and to give staff clear guidance in their delivery of *Here I Am*. Monitoring of teaching and learning and workbooks has been introduced. The spiritual and moral policies have been updated to include clear aims and practical objectives.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's view of its overall performance is accurate in the majority of areas. During inspection it was graded higher in developing the Catholic life of the school and in promoting community cohesion. 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 are fully committed to improvement. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Through the monitoring programme, ensure that outstanding practice is shared and there is consistency throughout the school;
- Continue to implement the targets set out in the self-evaluation document and the school development plan.

Achievement and standards

Learners' attainment on entry to the school overall is below national expectations. The number of children with special educational needs and /or disabilities is well above the national average. Learners make good progress in the school and by Key Stage 2 some children exceed 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 with the help provided by teachers and the very good teaching assistants. Children's work is marked with positive and challenging comments. In all key stages learners are confident in discussion, ask good questions showing knowledge and understanding of the subject. Throughout the school learners' work is recorded in a variety of ways. Some learners in Key Stage 2 write well independently in a variety of styles.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual development. The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. They have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are able to apply his teaching to their own lives and experiences. Learning about *Other Faiths* has been most enjoyable and has led children to an understanding of how people of *Other Faiths* make sense of the world. There are a wide variety of systems in place to reward effort and good behaviour. Learners have a good sense of right and wrong. Children's behaviour and respect for each other is outstanding. The provision which enables children's' spiritual and moral development is good.

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 practice. The majority of teaching was confident and enthusiastic in its exploration of the topic. A variety of teaching strategies, that enable children to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding, were used. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all learners. Most lessons had good pace and timing, which maintained learners' interest and concentration and kept them focussed. The learning objective

was highlighted at the beginning of the lesson and new learning related to it during the plenary session. In a few classes good use was made of keywords to enhance children's religious literacy. Less able learners were well supported and, in a few classes, the more able were challenged in a variety of ways. It is essential that all of the above good practice is consistent throughout the school in order to raise standards further. The majority of learners are enthusiastic and show real enjoyment of Religious Education. Learners work well independently and collaboratively undertaking a wide range of activities. Relationships are good and learners are continually affirmed and encouraged. In most classes good use is made of regular assessment to monitor learners' progress and to inform future planning. This needs to be consistent across the school. The provision of homework, when relevant, enables parents and carers to become involved in their children's Religious Education.

Grade: 2

Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is well matched to the needs and interests of the majority of learners. The school, using the *Here I Am* programme recommended by the Archdiocese, 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. Good links are made with home, parish and the local community. The Religious Education curriculum makes a good contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. The policies for spiritual and moral development have been updated and contain clear aims and practical guidelines.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Religious Education

Leadership and management in Religious Education are good. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on high standards. The Religious Education coordinator provides good leadership and support to staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She shows a genuine enthusiasm for her role. A good handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Performance in Religious Education is monitored through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks. St. Agnes' is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all staff and learners. Three of the six staff teaching Religious Education has a suitable qualification. It is recommended that those teachers currently without a qualification are

encouraged to undertake the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* currently on offer within the Archdiocese. Teaching assistants are planned for and utilised well during lessons. The Religious Education coordinator attends coordinators' meetings and in-service provided by the Department for Christian Education. Information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects. Resources have been recently updated and deployed well to achieve good standards. The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator keep governors fully informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Grade: 2

Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and management are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Agnes' is a place in which the gospel spirit of love and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. The Mission Statement clearly expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school. Since the last inspection it has been reviewed and clear aims and practical objectives, which show how it is so evidently lived out in the daily life of the school, have been added. Children are given opportunity to explore the Mission Statement at their level. The Mission Statement is used to inform and direct all school policies and plans. Reflection on the Mission Statement and its clear aims and practical objectives provides an effective system by which to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school on a regular basis.

Grade: 1

Collective Worship

The quality of Collective Worship is good overall. The school has identified this as an area that needs further development to ensure consistency throughout the school. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, or key stage gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

A very good policy supports the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Teachers and children are involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship during *Rejoice* celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer, scripture, music 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 good overall. All learners respond well and participate in acts of worship. The school has introduced the use of focus tables to support delivery of class Collective Worship. When appropriate, school Masses and other liturgical services are

celebrated. Collective Worship makes a good contribution to spiritual and moral development.

Grade: 2

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, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities. Parents and carers are involved in decision-making and the life of the school through having regular opportunities to share their views e.g. questionnaires, parents evenings etc. 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 the opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of children from Belarus, CAFOD, Willowbrook Hospice etc.

Grade: 1