



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

HUTYON

Inspection Date Tuesday 17 June 2014

Inspectors Mrs Pat Peel Mrs. Maria Eves

Unique Reference Number 104480

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

Type of School Catholic Primary

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Number on roll 222

Chair of Governors Mrs. Mary Russell

Acting Headteacher Miss Margi Evans

School address Hillside Road
 Huyton
 Knowsley
 L36 8BL

Telephone number 0151 477 8360

E-mail address saintcolumbas.knowsley.gov.uk

Date of last inspection 15 March 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. Columba's is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated Huyton in the Knowsley district of Liverpool and serving the parish of St. Columba.
- There are 222 children on roll of whom 170 are baptised Catholic, 52 come from other Christian denominations. There are no pupils from another faith or religious tradition.
- There are 10 teachers of whom 9 teach Religious Education. Eight teachers are Catholic. Five teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education with a further 4 currently undertaking it.
- Since the last inspection an Acting Headteacher and deputy have been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Overall effectiveness:

St. Columba's Primary School is outstanding in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.

- Pupils are outstanding in the way in which they contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life at St. Columba's.
- There is a shared vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community and reinforced in the school's Mission Statement and motto derived from it *"Together we are stronger."*
- Pupils have an excellent sense of belonging to the school. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary attitudes and relationships between all members throughout the school community. St. Columba's is an oasis whereby everyone feels safe and is loved for who they are.
- The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating and enriches pupil's sensory experiences particularly in regard to the Mission Statement which is lived, loved and owned by everyone in this most inclusive school community.
- Devotional areas around school and in classes are lovingly maintained and are a source of inspiration. In particular the 'footprints' focus which encapsulates a supportive and loving community and the plaited coloured rope with the words *"We are stronger when we all work together as part of the St. Columba's team,"* sums up the whole school ethos.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility from their earliest years by becoming councillors, play leaders and class monitors.
- In the wider community pupils act as ambassadors of the school during off site visits i.e. on visiting church in support of parish events, residential visits and singing in the local community.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities e.g. CAFOD, Comic Relief, Tickled Pink and Zoe's Place to name but a few and outreach to the local and wider community.
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential outdoor activities. Year 5 pupils have an opportunity to visit Winmarleigh Hall PGL Activity Centre in Preston, Lancashire.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships.
- Education for personal relationships has fostered positive attitudes in pupils and SEAL materials and circle time are used effectively to aid this. The school uses the 'All that I am' materials in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils benefit from an extremely caring and nurturing environment. The school employs both a learning mentor and parent liaison officer. These ably support pupils and families in all aspects of school life.
- The school has strong links with Rainbows an Archdiocesan supported bereavement programme for children.
- Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions and enthusiastically praise and celebrate each other's achievements at their weekly assemblies. They are rewarded with 'a pupil of the week cushion' and 'prayer'

award. The school also awards a number of 'Spot' trip prizes for pupils showing a range of behaviours acquired over time.

- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life. They are reflective and enquiring.
- Pupils are involved in service to the local Faith and religious communities by taking an active part in parish liturgies and choral events, the immediate neighbourhood served by the school in collecting food and making up hampers and outreach in the wider community through fundraising including the Good Shepherd Mass at the Metropolitan Christ The King Cathedral in support of Nugent Care.

How well pupils' achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment in Religious Education is outstanding.
- On entry to school many children have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.
- The school has embraced the Come and See programme and the needs of all the pupils are being met. The range of activities provided for the pupils are very effective in engaging and enthusing pupils from their earliest years.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is outstanding. They make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are outstanding and their support is highly effective.
- Assessments undertaken to date and scrutiny of workbooks provides evidence of pupils generally attaining a good level for their age and stage of development. Planning opportunities for the more able children needs further developing.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age or capacity.
- They 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 and enjoyment of their learning is outstanding as shown by their interest and exemplary behaviour. This is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils work extremely 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 recognise from a very early age that it is a fundamental part of life at St. Columba's.
- Their understanding and ability to link life experiences to scripture is outstanding. A year 5 pupil commented that *"We take Jesus as our inspiration and example."*
- Pupils are extremely respectful, act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- On the day of inspection pupils were thoroughly engaged and gave heartfelt responses when both praying and signing to a song during worship.
- Pupils are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles and their knowledge of liturgy is increasing.
- Pupils sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.

- The school is making very good use of materials provided by the Archdiocese.

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

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning is outstanding in ensuring that pupils are interested, engaged and make excellent progress.
- Teacher's planning is effective in meeting the needs of the pupils. This will be enhanced further by using the Archdiocesan proforma from the autumn term. This will bring about consistency across the whole school.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning when planning Religious Education lessons.
- Teachers display very good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. There was lots of evidence of pupils being challenged and inspired which enriches their enjoyment of Religious Education.
- Excellent use is made of time and resources e.g. interactive white board, God's Story, audio and visual media etc. The school is highly effective in deploying teaching assistants to enhance lessons for those children which require additional support.
- Pupils are very positively affirmed throughout their lessons and relationships are excellent. Marking is positive and informs pupils of their progress and in lots of books the next steps. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The school has implemented assessment strategies which provide information on the achievement of all pupils. The school has recognised the need to develop this further and has recently made a link with a nearby school to share moderation and best practice.
- The tracking of pupils' work in Religious Education is in place. The school has recognised that more work is needed to use the data which is being generated from it to target groups of children more closely.

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

- The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in promoting pupils' learning. Staff and governors see Religious Education as the core subject and at the very heart of the curriculum.
- 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 there is information on the website.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate and the programme is embedded securely across the school. Come and See engendered in pupils a real sense of engagement and enjoyment.
- Enrichment activities such as, Glee club, street dance, boccia, circuit fitness and a range of seasonal sports have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The school operates a very successful free breakfast club for any pupils that wish to attend and more recently they have supported a tumble tots session for parents and carers.

- The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- The school has provided pupils with opportunities to meet with the Merseyside Police, Fire Brigade, Social Services etc. who have explored local community issues with them. These incentives are a way of helping children to stay safe.
- Some children are involved in 'Action for Children' which aims to improve their self esteem and confidence.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of another faith and religion including Judaism and Islam. The children have benefitted from regular visits by Eric Cohen, a practising Jew who shared information about his faith. The children have also visited a synagogue and mosque. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding in reflecting the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of Faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- Collective Worship has a high profile and is central to the prayer life of St. Columba's.
- Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the Spiritual needs of this worshipping community.
- 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.
- Teachers have recently undergone In-service training for Collective Worship. The next stage is to help children to further develop the skills necessary to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship. This has begun in some classes but needs rolling out across the school.
- 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 priest is a regular visitor to the school and is fulsome in his praise of St. Columba's as a *"safe space where staff and children flourish."* The priest presides at celebrations of Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year.
- The school community benefits from the spiritual guidance and support of two religious sisters who are frequent visitors.

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 and developing the Catholic life of the school. The leadership team is deeply committed to the Church's Mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole school community.
- This is reflected in the Mission Statement outlining St. Columba's as a place where *"Together we are stronger"*.
- The aims and practical objectives derived from the Mission Statement direct and guide all aspects of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness.

- 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, raising awareness of those in need and charitable outreach.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. It is a comprehensive document which guides the school well.
- The school provides very good in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it.
- A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral developments are provided for all staff and pupils including Collective Worship, Retreat days to the Friary at Pantasaph and opportunities to join in 'Come and See for Yourself' at the beginning and 'Rejoice' celebrations at the end of each new topic.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school.
- There are positive relationships at every level leading to a welcoming, happy, safe and caring learning environment for staff and pupils.
- Governors are very well informed about life at St. Columba's and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. Together they have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. They are committed wholeheartedly to the Catholic Life of the school and are actively involved in its daily life and its monitoring and evaluation processes. There is a link governor for Religious Education and she supports the subject leader effectively in her role.
- The school supports the parish 'With You Always' family catechesis sessions.

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.

- The way in which leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.
- The Self Evaluation Document is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, analysis and self challenge.
- Teaching and learning is monitored regularly and appropriate feedback and support given as necessary.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all staff including attendance at Archdiocesan In-service Topic days and subject leader days.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The school tracks pupil progress in Religious Education. This needs to be analysed in greater depth to ensure that key areas for development are tackled systematically and fed back into teachers planning.
- The subject leader is excellent in guiding Religious Education she is enthusiastic and shows a real commitment to the role. Excellent documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject and new initiatives are introduced when appropriate. She has led the implementation of Come and See and has updated all the subsequent documentation and policies in light of the changes.

What does 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.
- Further develop the work being done in assessment, monitoring and tracking of pupils progress by:
 - using the information gleaned through analysis of data to inform teacher's planning leading to improvements in achievement of individuals and groups.
- 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.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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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	1
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	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1

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
