

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. Joseph's school is a smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Huyton and serves the parish of St. Agnes and St. Aidan's.
- There are 172 children on roll of whom 154 are baptised Catholic, 16 come from other Christian denominations, and two from other faith or religious traditions.
- There are 9 teachers of whom 9 teach Religious Education. Six teachers are Catholic. Eight teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and one is enrolled to begin in September.
- Since the last inspection there has been no significant change in personnel.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness:

St. Joseph'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. Joseph'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 'Everyone together with Jesus'. 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 of this most inclusive school community.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility from their earliest years by becoming councillors, Bully Busters, eco team members and playground buddies. 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 care home.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by the work they undertake in fundraising for numerous charities and outreach to the local and wider community e.g. CAFOD, Good Shepherd, MacMillan Cancer Care, Willowbrook Hospice, Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Pupils benefit from participation in annual residential outdoor activities. Year 6 pupils visit Kingswood Activity Centre in Colomendy, Denbighshire.
- Pupils have a very good 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 are used effectively to aid 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 their own parishes.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life. They are reflective and enquiring.
- The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating and enriches pupil's sensory experiences particularly in regard to the Mission Statement which is loved, lived and owned by everyone in the school community. The school benefits from an outside amphitheatre which is used for outside worship.
- Pupils have an excellent grasp of technology and use it to full effect. The environment is filled with photographs which the children have taken and have been incorporated into a cross, posters and books which shows off their lived experience of the Mission of the school in action.
- 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 though supporting a parish project

'Homorodu De Jus' a village in Romania and outreach in the wider community through fundraising. They show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions.

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 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 very good level for their age and stage of development with some pupils exceeding expectations.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more religiously literate as they become familiar with key words from the topics and driver words which are used routinely throughout lessons to raise achievement. Excellent use of 'think, pair, share' reinforces this. 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 have developed an enthusiasm for tackling challenging activities which is a result of teacher's high expectations of them.
- 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 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.
- Child initiated worship was observed on the day of inspection. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings.
- 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 has begun to use materials provided by the Archdiocese.
- Pupils are involved in planning, preparing and leading worship. All children from the earliest years are supported to be involved in this.

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 on the whole is effective in meeting the needs of the pupils. However, evidence in books shows that there are inconsistencies. This could be enhanced further in some classes by planning for a range of differentiated 'tasks' rather than an over reliance on pupil outcomes. This will add value to the already high expectations of all the children. In others a full range of differentiated tasks are set which consolidate, build on and extend pupils knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers display very good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching styles. Pupils are challenged and inspired which enriches their enjoyment of Religious Education.
- Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning when planning Religious Education lessons.
- Good use is made of time and resources e.g. interactive white board, God's Story, audio and visual media etc. Technology is used very effectively, together with the support provided by other adults to optimise learning. On the day of inspection ipads were observed being used by the youngest pupils.
- Pupils are positively affirmed throughout their lessons. Marking informs pupils of their progress and clearly identifies how they can improve further. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The school has implemented assessment strategies which provide information on the achievement of all pupils and portfolios of work are kept.
- The tracking of pupils' work in Religious Education has been maintained over a sustained period of time. Trends show that standards are improving steadily.
- Moderation takes place across the school. The subject leader supports this on a one to one basis which the school feels has added to the quality assurance.

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.
- The Headteacher has devised a way to incorporate the weekly Gospel into the newsletters which are sent home to parents and carers. This is proving successful.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. *Come and See* engendered in pupils a real sense of engagement and enjoyment.
- Enrichment activities such as cross country, football, athletics, magazine club and judo have a positive impact on the curriculum.
- The school operates a before school club.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.

- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals and support is used very effectively. Provision for pupils with additional and special needs is outstanding.
- Pupils have benefitted from participation in the 'One Of A Kind Project' a community programme which works in collaboration with 7 neighbouring schools to raise the children's awareness of issues such as discrimination, stereotyping and the devastating impact of hate crime – and the importance of promoting diversity and respecting people from different backgrounds.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. The school has recently covered Judaism as part of a rolling programme with Hinduism and Sikhism. The school has hosted many visitors including Eric Cohen, a practising Jew and Priti Mistri a Hindu is scheduled to visit shortly. The children have visited a Synagogue and Mandir as part of their topic work. 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 life of the school and a key part of every celebration.
- Collective Worship plays a key 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.
- Teachers provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and evaluate Collective Worship. The school has recently undergone further training in an effort to extend this and enhance pupils' prayer experiences further.
- 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. Both the parish priest and sister visit the school. The priest presides at celebrations of Mass throughout the Church's liturgical year. The parish sister provides spiritual and pastoral support.
- Pupils have attended Mass at the Metropolitan Christ the King Cathedral in support of Nugent Care.

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. They are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education.
- This is reflected in the Mission Statement outlining St. Joseph's as a place where '*Inspired by Jesus, we grow closer to God through prayer and worship...*' All those who form part of the school community were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives 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, charitable outreach and raising awareness of those in need.
- The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the school's rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. It is a comprehensive document which guides the school well. Since the last inspection the school has made significant progress in continuing to develop the areas it identified as key priorities. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and ongoing areas for development.
- The school provides good induction and 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, Archdiocesan led Spirituality days 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 and caring learning environment for staff and pupils.
- Governors are well informed and discharge their responsibilities in an appropriate manner. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school. They are committed wholeheartedly to the Catholic Life of the school.
- A member of staff is actively involved in delivering the 'With You Always' family catechesis sessions on behalf of the parish and the school community. The majority of governors are parishioners and they have worked hard to strengthen the home, school and parish bond.

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, searching 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 a rolling programme for attendance at Archdiocesan In-service Topic days and subject leader days.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance.
- The school regularly tracks pupil progress in Religious Education to ensure that key areas for development are tackled systematically. The teacher governor is also the curriculum link governor and a member of the senior leadership team. This ensures that Religious Education is given a high priority and any information is shared with all staff, leaders and governors through the relevant committees.
- The subject leader is excellent in guiding Religious Education. She shows real commitment and enthusiasm for the role and is energised by the task. 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. The staff is united in support of the subject leader and regard her as an inspiration and living testament to the Mission of the school.

- Everyone at St. Joseph's understands the school's Mission. They share its purpose and are actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

What does 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;
 - continuing to address the areas identified on the Self Evaluation Document.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

