



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY MAGDALEN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

PENWORTHAM

Tuesday 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

Inspectors Rev. D. Melly Miss. J. Coughlan

URN 119638

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	191
Chair of Governors	Mr. G. Collins
School address	Buller Avenue, Penwortham Preston Lancashire, PR1 9QQ.
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Date of last inspection	16 October 2006
Headteacher	Mr. J. Welch

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 Mary Magdalen School is a smaller than average Catholic primary school which is over subscribed. It is situated in Penwortham and is part of the Lancashire Local Authority. There are 191 learners on roll of whom 169 are baptised Catholics, 22 come from other Christian denominations and there are no learners from Other Faith Traditions. The catchment area is broadly average. The number of learners eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 8 members of staff 7 of whom are Catholic. Eight teachers teach Religious Education all of whom 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

St Mary Magdalen is an outstanding school. It is an open, welcoming, caring Catholic Community. Every child obviously matters and happiness is certainly at the centre as all are encouraged to maximise their potential and worth. A very strong Catholic ethos is certainly evident in the positive climate which has been created for work. Eucharist is lived in this school where all are constantly breaking themselves and pouring themselves out for others. Outstanding relationships have obviously been established by working closely with home, parish and the local and global community. All are valued, respected, cared for and affirmed. Standards are outstanding. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching is outstanding. Assessment is in place and is outstanding. The curriculum planning is outstanding and results in an effective delivery of the *Here I Am* programme. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education programme, Collective Worship and the Catholic life of the school make an outstanding contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. The headteacher and senior management team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths, a vision of how to meet development needs and the enthusiasm to ensure these are met.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Following the last Inspection in November 2006 the school has taken effective steps to highlight the learning objective of each lesson. The good practice in marking that was observed at the last inspection has now become standard practice in the school. The Mission Statement has also been reviewed and revised and the assessment procedures, recommended by the Department, have been put in place.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive though at times rather modest. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and the school development plan. 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 slightly below that typically expected of children of their age. Learners make outstanding progress in the school and by Year 6 meet or well exceed the expectations of the *Here I Am* programme. Standards in Religious Education overall are outstanding. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Learners with special needs make outstanding progress in Religious Education with the provision of differing tasks and the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment. This work is very thorough and is outstanding. All learners' work is marked with very positive comments that affirm. The marking highlights strengths and ways to further improve and gives pupils an opportunity to respond. Learners are very confident and articulate in discussion. They ask deep thoughtful questions which show good knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and a maturity beyond their years. Learners are given opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding and express their own thoughts and feelings 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. Children throughout the school are confident and obviously enjoy work. They have an outstanding understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and His Church and are able and happy to apply this to their own lives and experiences. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. They have a very good sense of right and wrong. They are very polite and courteous and obviously take great pride in their school. The Gospel values of love, respect, trust, tolerance and forgiveness underpin the provision for learners' moral development enabling learners to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Teachers and learners show genuine care, concern and respect for each other. All are extremely polite and helpful. The overwhelming feeling in the school is one of happiness, love and care. All are obviously happy to be in the school and have a real passion for everything concerned with Saint Mary Magdalen School.

Grade: 1

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

Teaching and learning

The quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching is outstanding overall. All teachers are exceptionally secure in their knowledge and understanding of the *Here I Am* programme and this is reflected in their thorough planning and confident delivery of the topics. All teachers are enthusiastic and energetic. *Here I Am* is extremely well used and it is obvious that the teachers enjoy teaching the programme and that the pupils share this enjoyment. There is some very creative use of the programme which could

profitably be shared throughout the school. There are excellent questioning techniques which challenge the learners who respond enthusiastically as they share deep meaningful thoughts. The listening skills of the learners are obviously very well developed. There is some outstanding use made of information communication technology. The development of this is a priority for the school. Outstanding use is made of praise and affirmation. This encourages the children and enables them to remain motivated and to have confidence in themselves. Children's behaviour and relationships are outstanding in all lessons. Learners are obviously valued in class. They are listened to and treated with respect not just by the teachers and support staff but also by their peers. The children demonstrated great respect for each other's opinions and points of view. This has obviously been role modelled by the adults and has resulted in high levels of learners' self-confidence and self-esteem which impacts on their learning. The tasks observed on the day were creative, challenging, interesting and, where appropriate, differentiated, catering well for the wide spectrum of learning abilities at both ends of the spectrum in each class. Because of this approach the children are able to learn and make progress. There is very good structure to all lessons, which, together with the diligence of the teachers and other adults, helps learners stay focussed. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of planning and learners' workbooks is in place and is very thorough and supportive. Outstanding use is made of support staff who promote positive relationships and encourage children to participate and stay on task. The learning objective is shared at the beginning of all lessons and also revisited at the end. All pupils understand and achieve the Learning Objective. This enables the sharp focus of the lesson to be adhered to. Learners' work is regularly assessed and records are effectively kept. This work is outstanding.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in a variety of ways. There is an open-door policy in the school. Attractive newsletters are sent to the homes regularly outlining the religious topics to be covered and how families can become involved in the learning process. Parents are invited to attend school Masses, assemblies and special celebrations. The school also reports comprehensively on progress in Religious Education. Parents obviously greatly appreciate what the school is doing as shown by the returned questionnaires which also contained numerous personal notes of appreciation.

Grade: 1

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 approximately 10% is allocated to Religious Education, which is a

requirement of the Bishops of England and Wales. Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. 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 enabling them, above all, to be self-reflective.

Grade: 1

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, Religious Education coordinator and senior management team are extremely enthusiastic and committed. They are making an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff. They are very good role models and have a clear vision for the further development of the school. An outstanding handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, teaching and learning and workbooks is in place. This is very thorough and very supportive. Formal assessment is also in place and is outstanding. A great deal of time and effort has obviously gone into this work. All of the staff teaching Religious Education have a suitable qualification. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed. The subject leader 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 Religious Education coordinator keeps governors well informed on matters relating to Religious Education. Fr. Austin is very much involved in the life of the school. His presence and input are greatly appreciated. Governors are keen to discharge their responsibilities effectively. All the governors are extremely involved and are obviously passionate about their 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. St Mary Magdalen is a school in which Gospel values of love, respect and forgiveness permeate every aspect of its life and work. The learners are obviously valued, affirmed and respected. This helps them to be confident and happy. An outstanding Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place. The aims of the Mission Statement have practical objectives which show how the aims are to be achieved. All who form the school community were involved in the development of the Mission Statement, which is at the heart of all that is done in the school. The Mission

Statement is reviewed on a regular basis. The learners have a very appropriate vision statement which is more appropriate to their age and stage of development.

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, phase or whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. Outstanding guidelines support the planning, delivery and nurturing of Collective Worship. Acts of worship are well planned for, with great attention to detail. The experiences on the day included music to create an atmosphere which was still and calm and very conducive to reflection. There were outstanding focuses with lighted candles and appropriate artefacts in place. The themes chosen to celebrate were very much rooted in the children's own experience. There was also time for personal reflection, which was well used. Appropriate hymns were sung enthusiastically. There was prayer, both formal and informal. The learners and adults present responded positively to the warm, affirming experience. Focus tables and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are colourful, attractive and well presented, expressing well the topic of *Beginnings*. This enhances the delivery of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children. The garden area, which is being developed and where the pupils are totally involved, will prove to be a very conducive area for Collective Worship and providing opportunities for awe and wonder.

Grade: 1

Community Cohesion

The school's leadership and management in promoting community cohesion are outstanding. There is a shared vision and commitment to serve the common good. There is great emphasis in the school on recycling and caring for the planet. Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. It is obvious that every person matters in this school. Close links have been forged with the local community schools who have been involved in various enterprises. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education programme, *Here I Am*, supports community cohesion. Learners have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. All show a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of CAFOD, Nugent Care, Blue Peter fundraising, St Catherine's Hospice, Manchester Children's Hospital, Spectacles for the developing world.

Grade 1

