



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. MARIE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### STANDISH

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Thursday 10 April 2008

Inspectors      Rev. D. Melly      Mrs. D. Martin

URN              106493

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 -11
Number on roll	249
Chair of governors	Mr. T. A. Rynn
School address	Avondale Street, Standish, Wigan, WN6 0LF.
Telephone number	01257 422975
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E-mail address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@admin.saintmaries.wigan.sch.uk">enquiries@admin.saintmaries.wigan.sch.uk</a>
Date of last inspection	29 November 2005
Headteacher	Mrs. E. Somers

## 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. Marie's School is a larger than average primary school. It is situated in Standish and mainly serves the parish of St. Marie. It is part of the Wigan Local Authority. The catchment area is mainly owner-occupied housing. A large majority of the learners are White British; very few of the learners speak English as a second language. There are 249 learners on roll of whom 238 are baptised Catholics, 5 come from other Christian denominations and there are 5 learners from *Other Faith* traditions. The number of learners eligible for free school meals are well below average as is the number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 14 members of the teaching staff 13 of whom are Catholic. Twelve teachers teach Religious Education 6 of whom have a Religious Education qualification and 4 are currently on the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* course.

## 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. Marie's is an outstanding school. It is an open, welcoming, Christ centred community where all are enabled to achieve their potential, working in partnership with the homes, the parish and the wider community. A very strong Catholic ethos is certainly evident in the positive climate, which has been created for work. 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 overall. Learners achieve well and make outstanding progress. Teaching is outstanding overall. Assessment is in place and is well developed. The curriculum planning is very good and thorough 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 and a vision of how to meet development needs.

**Grade: 1**

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

Following the last Section 23 Inspection in March 2004 the school has continued its self-evaluation and identification of areas for development. All staff have been encouraged to avail of in-service provided by the department especially in Collective Worship. Focus tables have been revamped and are now more linked to the current topic. Resources have been updated. The children's Mission Statement has been completed. Links with the home and the parish have been strengthened.

**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 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 make outstanding 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 outstanding. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Learners with special needs make very good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by the teachers and learning support assistants. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment which is rigorous and thorough. The development of this work is ongoing. Learners' work is always marked with positive, encouraging and constructive comments. Learners are very confident and articulate in discussion and feel free to proudly talk about themselves and their home. 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.

The school celebrates achievements in lessons and assemblies. Children throughout the school are confident and obviously enjoy 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, which is supported by the effective rewards and sanctions system and the positive behaviour policy which is in place and is known and understood by the whole community. The Gospel values of love, care and respect underpin the provision for Religious Education enabling learners to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Teachers and learners show genuine care, concern and respect for each other.

**Grade: 1**

## **Quality of Provision for Religious Education**

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning is outstanding in meeting the children's needs. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the *Here I Am* programme and this is reflected in their thorough planning and very confident delivery of the topics. *Here I Am* is well used. There are many examples of extremely enthusiastic teaching, which show creativity and imagination. This challenges the learners and enables them to respond enthusiastically and helps them to work well both independently and collaboratively. Good use is made of information communication technology with some outstanding examples seen. Question and answer techniques are extremely good and recall previous learning well. Most learners are challenged and respond

positively. The learners' thinking skills are obviously very well developed. Outstanding use is also made of role-play and hot seating. 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. Affirmation is used to great effect. Most of the tasks observed on the day were challenging, interesting and differentiated, catering well for the wide spectrum of learning abilities in the school. Because of this approach the children are able to learn and make progress. There is very good structure to the lessons, which, together with the diligence of the teachers, helps learners stay focussed. Learners work extremely well both independently and collaboratively. Monitoring of teaching and learning through observation of planning, lessons and learners' workbooks, has been put in place and is very thorough. Teachers make very effective use of other adults during lessons. The learning objective is shared at the beginning of most of the lessons and is sometimes revisited. This helps maintain the sharp focus of the lesson. Learners' work is regularly assessed and records are effectively kept in portfolios.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in a variety of ways. Weekly newsletters explain what is being taught in school together with ways they can be involved in their children's education. These newsletters are also sent to the parish priest each week and relevant information is shared with parishioners who show interest in the life of the school. Newsletters are also sent to the homes regularly with an outline of the religious topics to be covered and suggestions for involvement. Parents are also invited to attend class Masses which are shared with the parish. They are invited to celebration assemblies and special celebrations and are given information about these before they attend. The school also reports on progress in Religious Education.

**Grade: 1**

## **Curriculum**

The school is outstanding 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. Very strong links are made with home, parish and the local and global community. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development.

**Grade: 1**

# **Leadership and Management**

## **Religious Education**

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 and the enthusiasm of the learners. The headteacher, leadership team are extremely committed. They are making an outstanding contribution in leading and supporting staff and have a clear vision for the further development of the school. The headteacher, who is also the Religious Education coordinator, shows tremendous enthusiasm for the role. She is a great example to others in the school community. An excellent handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring through scrutiny of planning, workbooks, teaching and learning is in place and is outstanding. A process of assessment is also in place and is very effective. Three of the twelve staff teaching Religious Education have a suitable qualification and a further four are in the process of obtaining the *Certificate in Religious Studies*. 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 resourced and funding has been well used to add value to children's learning. The headteacher keeps governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. The parish priest is also a very valued member of the community and his contribution to the life of the school is greatly appreciated. Governors discharge their responsibilities most effectively. All the governors are very involved in the life of the school and are not only supportive but also challenging.

**Grade: 1**

## **Catholic Life of the School**

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school. St. Marie's is a school in which the Gospel spirit of love, care, mutual respect, permeates every aspect of its life and work. The learners are obviously valued, affirmed and respected. This helps them to be confident and happy. A good Mission Statement, which expresses the philosophy of education in this Catholic school, is in place. Aims, flowing from the Mission Statement with objectives showing how the aims are to be achieved, are also in place. All who form the school community, including the learners are involved in the development of the Mission Statement, which is at the heart of all that is done in the school.

**Grade: 1**

## **Collective Worship**

The quality of Collective Worship overall is outstanding. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, phase and whole school gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. A very good policy and guidelines to support the planning, delivery and nurturing of Collective Worship is in place. Acts of worship include music to create atmosphere, a focus with lighted candles and appropriate artefacts. Very good use is made of the Gospel from *God's Story*. There is some time for personal reflection, which is extremely well used and helps learners carry the message into the rest of the day. The learners present respond well to the warm, nurturing encouragement of the leaders. Focus tables and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are colourful, attractive and well presented, expressing well the topic of *Holidays/Holydays*. 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.

**Grade: 1**

## **Community Cohesion**

The school's leadership team 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 for all. Parents and carers are very involved in decision-making and in the life of the school. 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, which in turn has been supported by the many visitors invited into the school including Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson. Learners have explored the beliefs and values of Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. All show a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of CAFOD, Nugent Care, Darian House, Diabetes UK. All children make a positive contribution to the life of the local community e.g. through the eco school's project they planted bulbs and scattered wild flower seeds in the area. They are also encouraged to care for the environment through reusing and recycling.

**Grade 1**