



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### SUTTON MANOR

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Tuesday 3 July 2007

Inspectors Mrs. Marie Connolly Mr. M. Halford

URN 104823

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	2-11
Number on roll	204
Chair of Governors	Rev. Philip Swanson
School address	Cannon Street, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA9 4XU.
Telephone number	01744 678652
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E-mail address	sttheresa@sthelens.org.uk
Date of last inspection	12 March 2002
Head teacher	Mrs. H. Arnold

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2006.

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. Theresa's is an average sized Catholic primary school. It is situated in Sutton, an area of some considerable social and economic hardship. The majority of learners are drawn from St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Parish. There are currently 204 children on roll of whom 180 are baptised Catholics. Twenty-four children come from other Christian denominations. The majority of children come from a white British background. Attainment on entry overall is below that expected. There are 8 teachers teaching Religious Education, 6 are Catholic, 6 have a Religious Education qualification. An additional member of staff is currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. The Religious Education coordinator has been in post for some time.

## 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. Theresa's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is a most inclusive community, underpinned by an exceptionally strong Catholic ethos, which establishes a positive climate for work. This is a school where the well being of every child is of paramount importance to the dedicated and hard working staff. The gospel values of love, care and respect very evidently underpin every aspect of school life. As the Mission Statement states it is a community where everyone can 'do little things well'. Excellent relationships exist at every level. All are made welcome and made to feel that they matter. The school works closely with home, the parish, and the wider community. Standards are outstanding. Learners achieve well consistently and make outstanding progress throughout the school. Overall, teaching is outstanding. Assessment provides clear guidance on learning. The curriculum is well planned. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Collective Worship contains many outstanding elements. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. Creative and imaginative strategies have been employed to enable this to happen formally and informally. The Religious Education coordinator, supported by the headteacher, are exemplary in the manner in which they direct and guide the school. They understand the outstanding nature of the school but are realistic in appreciating the hard work and effort that enables such high achievement and standards to be maintained and developed further.

### **Grade: 1**

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

Since the last inspection the school has not only maintained the excellent practice observed on that occasion but continued to identify areas for ongoing development. New teaching and learning strategies including those using information communication technology have been introduced and significantly enhance the delivery of Religious Education. Monitoring and assessment procedures have continued to inform and improve teaching and learning. The Mission Statement is reviewed regularly to ensure ownership by the whole school community. The provision of a quiet prayer room that is also used to support the *Rainbows* programme is a clear indication of the school's commitment to nurturing the spiritual development of its children.

#### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is excellent. The judgements made in this document broadly match, though some underestimate, the judgements made in this report. The school and governors are aware of the outstanding work being undertaken in every aspect of school life. The school will update the self-evaluation regularly and this will continue to inform the improvement plan. Any minor areas for development identified in this report should now be included. The leadership has a clear understanding of what needs to be

developed, and openness to new challenges. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement as shown by the shared commitment to Religious Education and related whole school issues by all.

**Grade: 1**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure time and finance is made available to support the ongoing spiritual development and nurture of staff.

## **Achievement and standards**

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is below that expected. Learners make outstanding progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education overall are outstanding, with the majority of learners meeting the learning objectives and outcomes set, according to their age and stage of development. There is no significant difference in performance by learners of different gender. Learners with special needs make very good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by excellent teaching assistants and some differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. The school checks on the progress made by all through assessment and some positive but challenging marking. In all key stages learners show confidence in discussion and feedback, showing a real knowledge and understanding of the subject and its relevance in their lives. All children show enthusiasm and excitement in their work. Standards will continue to rise and further progress be made by the ongoing use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and scrutiny of the formal assessments made each term.

Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. Many wonderful strategies, including those using information communication technology are used to enable them apply this teaching to their own lives and experiences e.g. drama, role play positions of responsibility e.g. prefects and school council. The work undertaken on *Other Faiths* has helped the children understand how others make sense of the world in which we live and also promotes tolerance and respect for those whose views differ from our own. Links with the parish and local community are very good. The behaviour of children throughout the school is excellent. Children have a good sense of right and wrong. Innumerable strategies are in place to support the moral development of all e.g. Discipleship and SMART awards. The school also provides outstanding opportunities for spiritual development e.g. Rainbows use of the SEAL materials, the provision of a quiet prayer room to name but a few. Displays and photographs provide evidence of this excellent practice. The school environment itself is a stimulating and cheerful place in which to work. The children are enabled to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. As a

Year 2 child commented – the best thing about this school is that ‘everyone helps you’.

**Grade: 1**

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

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall, the quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. The learning needs of all children are addressed through the use of some exceptionally creative and imaginative teaching and learning strategies, some differentiation of tasks and by additional support. Sharing outstanding practice through the monitoring process enables teachers to share where this has been identified and will enable the ongoing development of all. Teaching is enthusiastic and exciting which helps learners engage with the material presented and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Some excellent use is being made of information communications technology e. g. Year 6 were using comic life on the Apple Macs while another group were creating storyboards for ipod casts about the life of Jesus in the Holy Land. Well-prepared resources significantly enhanced the delivery of lessons. Teachers should ensure the quality of images selected by the children for inclusion in their work are of a high calibre. Teachers and support assistants provide a highly creative and stimulating environment which supports and challenges learners. Teachers make excellent use of highly competent teaching assistants and helpers to support group work and those learners with additional learning needs.

Very good planning and a good understanding of the Religious Education programme directs and guides all staff. Staff need only use one form of planning. The lessons observed had good pace and timing, which maintained the interest and concentration of learners and kept them on task and focussed. Work is provided that enables learners to work independently and collaboratively. Teachers ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective at the start of the lesson. This is then re-visited during the plenary session. Learners’ religious literacy is being enhanced by use of the key words for each topic. Assessment is rigorous showing clearly which targets have been met. This informs future planning.

Parents and carers are enabled to become involved in their children’s Religious Education by the provision of regular newsletters and curriculum meetings informing them of what is to be covered. Parents also benefit from being invited to school regularly for a variety of celebrations and assemblies. Images of recent drama productions become part of the main focus for display in the school foyer, which is another creative way of sharing the subject with parents and visitors.

**Grade: 1**

## **Curriculum**

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests 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. The leadership of the school ensures suitable positioning of Religious Education on timetables. Curriculum outlines are provided for parents. Parents are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. Overall the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. The overwhelming enthusiasm and energy of teachers in caring for the children and each other is a powerful example to the children of 'living faith'. They make the curriculum exciting and relevant through use of many stimulating resources and ensure a suitable learning environment is provided. The parish priest who is also chair of governors is highly supportive of the work undertaken in school, and of the Religious Education programme. This enhances the delivery of the programme and enables children to make connections with the parish community and church.

**Grade: 1**

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Religious Education**

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are outstanding. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards even further. The Religious Education coordinator is the longest serving member of staff and also attended this school. Her commitment to the children, the school and Religious Education is exemplary. Supported by the headteacher, she provides effective and efficient support to staff. They are outstanding in the area of school religious leadership, showing enthusiasm, flair and commitment. Excellent and extensive documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. This also provides evidence of the consistently high quality of practice and achievement in Religious Education and associated whole school issues. Coordinators' meetings have been attended regularly and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Regular in-service is provided for all staff in Religious Education. The staff undertakes *Before You Begin* together prior to taking a topic into the classroom. The coordinator facilitates this by creating reflection sheets that include relevant material for teachers at every level. This significantly enhances understanding and delivery of the topic. Performance in Religious Education is monitored. The ongoing scrutiny of

planning, workbooks and teaching and learning and effective use of the findings will enable greater consistency and raise standards even further. Self-assessment is undertaken for each topic by staff and learners. St. Theresa's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. Excellent support is given to those children with additional learning needs. This is undertaken with joy. Of the 8 staff teaching Religious Education 6 are Catholic. All are committed Christians. Six have a suitable qualification. A further member of staff is currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Priorities for the subject are identified and targets set. Funding for Religious Education is very good. Resources have been purchased or created by members of staff and are deployed to achieve high standards. The school is making some excellent use of interactive white boards. This practice should continue to develop. Further use of the CD Rom for *The Church's Story* will enhance the delivery of Religious Education. Excellent use is made of display and photographic evidence, which is annotated in extensive portfolios and all around the school. The Religious Education coordinator and headteacher keep the governors informed on matters relating to Religious Education. As the chair of governors is a regular visitor to school he is very aware of all aspects of school life and completely involved in the Religious life of the school. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively, and are most supportive in the life and work of the school. Several attended the school and provide an excellent link with the parish community.

**Grade: 1**

### **Catholic Life of the School**

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement are outstanding. St. Theresa's is a highly inclusive community in which the gospel spirit of love, consideration, care and respect permeates every aspect of its life and work. It is a place that enables every member of the community 'to do the little things well'. However, there is 'little' about the contribution this makes to the Catholic life of the school! Relationships at every level are excellent. An atmosphere of joy, tolerance and respect permeates the school. It is a community that believes and lives its mission. The school has a clear sense of its mission in reaching out to those less fortunate than itself. Learners support a variety of local, national and international charities both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources e.g. the work undertaken for Sr. Mary in Africa. The life of the school is displayed in a tile mural in the school foyer. This welcomes everyone. In the entrance hall images of the Mission being lived out are displayed through a loop on a laptop. The Mission is also displayed in classrooms, policy documents and other places around the school. Its aims and objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life. The school council have interpreted the Mission Statement for them and discussed its implications. This serves to ensure ownership and also affirm the enormous contribution made by all.

**Grade: 1**

## **Collective Worship**

The quality of opportunities and experiences offered for Collective Worship are 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 policy that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship has been produced. Guidelines that support the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place have also been produced and included in this policy. A simple planner has been produced to help staff. Collective Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The school monitors the planning and delivery of Collective Worship to enable good practice to be shared.

A focus for worship is provided in each classroom using suitable religious objects and artefacts. These vary in quality and it would be good for some to be enhanced by changing cloths and items depending on the topic being reflected upon. Focus tables are used effectively for both Collective Worship and also during lessons. A suitable focus for worship is set up in the school hall when children gather there for worship. Learners are encouraged to participate in a meaningful manner both in class and larger gatherings. This enriches their experience and was observed on the day of inspection as each class contributed to a larger gathering in a manner best suited to their age and stage of development e.g. through prayer, poetry, song, drama dance signing etc. Teachers ensure time is given to individual reflection and are helping them develop skills which enhance this. This is undertaken more effectively in smaller gatherings. The quiet prayer room is a perfect setting for such reflection and should be encouraged further. Creativity is used to support learners' ongoing spiritual and moral development during acts of Collective Worship e.g. use of different types of prayer, music and symbol. The garden area created outside is used for class acts of worship and mass has been celebrated outside when the weather permits. Parents, governors and friends of the school community including the elderly are invited to a variety of assemblies and services. This is greatly appreciated. Masses are celebrated at different times during the school year. Children have created altar cloths, a stole for the priest and sacred vessels, which are used during these celebrations.

**Grade: 1**