



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

### INSPECTION REPORT

### ST. BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### SHEVINGTON

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Tuesday 24 March 2009

Inspectors Ms. Nora Finnegan Mr. David O'Brien

URN 106508

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	3 -11
Number on roll	203
Chair of Governors	Mrs. K. Winstanley
School address	Church Road, Shevington, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 8BD.
Telephone number	01257 401125
E-mail address	headteacher@admin.saintbernadettes.wigan.sch.uk
Date of last inspection	15 November 2005
Headteacher	Mr. John Hanley

## 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. Bernadette's is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Shevington, Lancashire. It serves the local parish of St. Bernadette. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average, although the school serves a mixed community. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage. A very small number of children speak English as an additional language. Children enter the school with skills that overall are average for their age. There are 203 children on roll of whom 188 are baptised Catholics and 12 come from other Christian denominations. There is 1 child from an *Other Faith* tradition and 2 children do not belong to any faith group. There are 10 full-time members of staff, 8 of whom are Catholic. Seven of the 8 teachers who teach Religious Education have a Religious Education qualification and 1 teacher is currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. A number of major staff changes have taken place since the last inspection. Since November 2007, in the absence of a headteacher, the school was managed by senior staff until the present headteacher took up his post in January 2009. A new Religious Education coordinator has also been appointed.

## 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. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is a good school with outstanding features. It is a harmonious community, underpinned by a very strong Catholic ethos where the staff and governors, in the spirit of Jesus, are excellent role models of service. It enables children "to celebrate God's gifts" and sets them "on the path to a lifetime of learning". This establishes a very positive climate for work. The leadership and management are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. Living the values of Jesus, especially mutual respect, are at the heart of this community. Positive relationships have been established by working in genuine partnership with home, parish and the local community. Standards are good. Learners achieve well and make good progress. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory. The school is good in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of learners. Learners' behaviour is outstanding. The Religious Education subject leader provides good leadership and support to staff. The commitment, vision and energy of the governors enable them to discharge their responsibilities in an outstanding manner. The quality of Collective Worship is good. The provision for learners' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make an outstanding contribution to this. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion. This is evident by the strong links fostered with the parish and both the local and wider community.

**Grade: 2**

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

The school had three key issues from its last Section 23 Inspection in November 2005. Despite the major changes in leadership most of these have been fully addressed. Monitoring of Religious Education has been introduced through lesson observations, learner interviews, and scrutiny of planning, workbooks and displays. Since the appointment of the new headteacher all staff, together with the chair of governors and parish priest reviewed the Mission Statement and its aims and looked at practical ways of achieving them. Practical objectives have not yet been added to the Mission Statement. Staff have been given opportunity to attend spirituality courses led by the Archdiocese. Time and finance have been provided for the development of the new coordinator. Teachers' understanding of *Here I Am* topics has been developed through sharing of information from topic days. The Religious Education handbook and the Collective Worship policy have been updated but need further development. In-service has been provided to develop teachers' understanding of Collective Worship. Parents/carers are given detailed information about what is taught in Religious Education and are invited to participate in celebrations. Resources have been updated. Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are evaluated on a regular basis.

**Grade: 2**

## **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation is comprehensive and its view of its overall performance is mostly accurate. It is recommended that when updating the self-evaluation the school gives itself a more realistic timescale to address areas highlighted by the monitoring process. This will give greater opportunity to celebrate progress. The priorities for both the improvement of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school stem from the self-evaluation and will be influenced by the findings of this inspection. The leadership has a very clear understanding of what needs to be developed and is fully committed to improvement. There is outstanding capacity and eagerness for further improvement.

### **Grade 1:**

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

- Share good practice through the monitoring process to raise standards further;
- continue to implement the targets set out in the school self-evaluation documentation.

## **Achievement and standards**

Learners' attainment on entry to the school covers the full spectrum but overall is about that expected nationally. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most learners, in relation to their capability and starting points, make good progress in the school. Standards in Religious Education are good overall with some children in Year 6 exceeding expectations. There are no significant differences in performance by learners of different gender or ethnic background. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in Religious Education with the help provided by other adults and differentiation of tasks to meet their needs. In some classes use of challenging questions and tasks is made to enable more able children fulfil their potential. This good practice needs to be shared throughout the school. The school checks on the progress made by all children through good use of informal assessment and the expectation statements. Children's work is marked with positive challenging comments. Formal assessment of Religious Education is at the early stages of introduction. The ongoing use of the information gathered through the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning and analysis of the information from formal assessment will enable the school to raise standards further. Children are very confident in discussion and feedback and have a very good knowledge of the subject and its relevance to their lives. They show real enthusiasm for Religious Education while undertaking their work. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. The children are enabled to make a good contribution to the school community e. g. School Council, involvement in the appointment of a new headteacher, etc.

### **Grade: 2**

# Quality of Provision for Religious Education

## Teaching and learning

The evidence in planning and workbooks, together with the observation on the day of inspection show that teaching and learning is good overall. Two outstanding lessons were observed on the day of inspection. Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are very well planned taking account of the needs of different learners within the class. Teaching is very precise and clearly focussed on the learning objective. This enables the children to understand clearly what they are learning about. Teaching is confident and enthusiastic and the lesson is well paced. Use is made of a range of resources to challenge and stimulate the children. The learning needs of all children, including those who are more able, are addressed through use of imaginative teaching and learning strategies. Challenging, differentiated questions and tasks, together with good support for those less able, ensures that all children are enabled to make outstanding progress. Learning is summed up very effectively during the plenary session and related to the objective. Use of self-assessment enables learners to check on their own progress and celebrate their new knowledge and skills. Children are also given time to reflect at a deep level in order to relate their learning to their everyday lives. Sharing of all the above outstanding practice, through the monitoring process, will enable the school to raise standards further. In all classes lessons are well planned taking account of the needs of most learners, including those who are less able. In some classes the needs of more able children need to be addressed more fully through use of challenging tasks and questions. Good use is made of a variety of teaching and learning styles. The work given enables the children to work well independently and collaboratively. Children's religious literacy is developed very well e.g. exploring what "self-discipline" and "Ash Wednesday" mean. Learning is summed up very effectively during the plenary session and, in most classes, related to the objective. In many classes, children are also given time to reflect in order to relate their learning to their everyday lives. In a few classes the learning objective needs to be explored more fully during the introduction and the pacing of the lesson needs to be faster.

The learning environment throughout the school is creative and stimulating and *Here I Am* displays are used very effectively to support teaching and learning. Use of the formal assessment tasks provided by the Archdiocese has been made but the school has identified that further in-service is needed to develop teachers' understanding further. Analysis of formal assessment, by the leadership team, will highlight what the school needs to do to improve standards further. Parents' and carers' involvement in their children's Religious Education is outstanding. They are sent a *Here I Am* newsletter each term which gives them detailed information about the topics being studied and suggestions for tasks to do at home. This enables them to become fully involved in their children's Religious Education. Parents/carers are also invited to celebrations. They receive regular verbal and written reports of their child's progress.

**Grade: 2**

## **Curriculum**

The school is good in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and interests of most learners. Those children who are less able are very well supported in all classes. The good practice of challenging the more able through questioning and tasks, which was observed in some classes, needs to be more consistent throughout the school. 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 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership of the school ensures that quality time is given to the positioning of Religious Education on timetables. Children are given opportunity to apply their learning to their own lives e.g. "how trying to live out my self-development plan will involve me having to make choices". The use of role play, music, information communication technology and other creative activities enrich the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. The parish priest makes a good contribution to the Religious Education curriculum e.g. role play of Baptism, showing the books used in Church etc. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development. Children have a good sense of right and wrong and are given opportunities during topics to develop this e.g. how choosing to 'grow in God's way' would make a difference at home, in the playground etc. The school has statements to support spiritual and moral development. These are very obviously lived out in the daily life of the school.

**Grade: 2**

## **Leadership and Management**

### **Religious Education**

Leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education are good. There is a clear vision for the subject within the mission of the school with a focus on raising standards. The new Religious Education coordinator provides good leadership for the staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She shows a genuine enthusiasm for her role and is fully committed to her task. A good handbook guides and directs all staff in their delivery of Religious Education. Coordinators' meetings are attended on a regular basis and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. The school has identified the need to give other staff opportunity to attend topic days to support them in their planning and delivery of Religious Education.

Performance in Religious Education is monitored through observation of teaching and learning, questioning of children, scrutiny of planning, workbooks and displays. This will enable the school to share good practice and further raise standards. St. Bernadette's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for most learners to make progress. Of the 8 staff teaching Religious Education 7 have a suitable qualification and 1

teacher is currently undertaking the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*. Other adults are planned for and are involved in supporting teaching and learning during lessons. Priorities for the subject are clearly identified and targets set. Religious Education is funded on par with other core subjects and resources have been updated since the last inspection. The headteacher and the Religious Education coordinator keep governors fully informed of the strengths and areas for development relating to Religious Education. The commitment, vision and energy of the governing body enable them to discharge their responsibilities in an outstanding manner.

## **Grade: 2**

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

There is outstanding leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school through the Mission Statement. St. Bernadette's is a living Christian community in which the values of Jesus, especially respect for each other, are very much at the heart of the community. Since the appointment of the new headteacher all members of staff, together with the chair of governors and the parish priest reviewed the Mission Statement and looked at practical ways of living it out. The children's motto 'celebrating God's gifts on our journey with Jesus' encourages them to give of their best in all areas of school life. The school has identified the need to give children more opportunities to explore the mission statement at their own level. The Mission Statement informs all school policies and plans. It is recommended that, in light of recent changes, a more formal review of the Mission Statement is planned. This will enable the whole school community to explore their mission together and then draw up clear aims and practical objectives which show how it is lived out. The school should then use its entrance to proclaim its mission to all members of the community. Regular reviews of the Mission Statement, with its clear aims and practical guidelines, will enable the governors and staff to effectively monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school.

## **Grade: 1**

### **Collective Worship**

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The school provides Collective Worship in a variety of ways for each child daily, in class, whole school or key stage gatherings. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance.

A good policy supports the planning and delivery of Collective Worship wherever and whenever it takes place. This would be enriched by the addition of practical guidelines. Since the last inspection in-service has been provided to develop teachers' understanding further. The school has adopted the planning format provided by the liturgy office to ensure that all Collective Worship is an enriching experience. Teachers and children plan and deliver Collective Worship. Parents/carers are invited to participate in celebrations. Acts of worship include various forms of prayer, scripture, power-point presentations, reflection, joyful singing and other elements that support liturgical formation. Worship stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs. The Collective Worship observed was good

with outstanding features. Children and adults actively participate in acts of worship. In some classes they are also given quality time for reflection at the end of Religious Education lessons. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to spiritual and moral development.

**Grade: 2**

## **Community Cohesion**

The school 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. Parents and carers are involved in decision-making and the life of the school. They are invited to celebrations, receive regular newsletters and have opportunities to share their views e.g. questionnaires. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the diversity of belief within the school. The use of the Religious Education Programme, *Here I Am*, provides outstanding support to community cohesion. Learners have had opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of other faiths: Judaism and Islam. This has been greatly enhanced by the contribution made by visitors from *Other Faiths* and visits to places of worship. St. Bernadette's has very strong links with the parish and local community e.g. the parishioners coming to school Mass, visits to church, joining the local community to celebrate Lancashire Day, Year 6 links with the Bowling Club etc. The school community shows a concern for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in their support of local and global charities e.g. CAFOD, H.C.P.T. Butterflies etc.

**Grade: 1**









