



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WARRINGTON

Inspection Date 16 April 2013
Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty Mrs. Dorothy Martin
Unique Reference Number 111307

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011

Type of School Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils 3-11
Number on roll 224 (including 36 part time Nursery)
Chair of Governors Mrs. Bernadette Gorman
Headteacher Mrs. Frances Curless
School address Bewsey Road,
Warrington
WA5 0JS
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E-mail address Stalbans_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk
Date of last inspection 28 June 2011

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 Alban's school is a slightly smaller than average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Warrington, in the Warrington district of the Archdiocese and serves the parish of St. Alban's and Sacred Heart.
- There are 224 children on roll (including 36 part time nursery pupils) of whom 168 are baptised Catholic, 35 come from other Christian denominations, 9 from other faith or religious traditions and 12 have no religious affiliation.
- There are 10 teachers at the school including the headteacher, 5 of whom are Catholic. Eight teachers teach Religious Education and 6 teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education.
- Both the headteacher and the subject co-ordinator were in post at the time of the last inspection.
- Over 40% of the pupils speak English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

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Overall effectiveness:

St. Alban's is an outstanding school in providing Catholic Education.

Inspection Judgements

The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- They know and understand the school's Mission Statement, 'Inspired to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we work, play and pray together,' and understand the part they play within it. Each year, they have the opportunity to reflect upon it and review it.
- Pupils have a good sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They understand the demands and responsibilities that living their mission places on them. This is evident especially in how they form their relationships and consider others views and feelings.
- They are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and wider community e.g. as play leaders, eco club members and school councillors. Within these roles, they care for the environment, look after younger members of the community and raise awareness to the needs of the less fortunate.
- Pupils are actively involved in developing the Catholic character of the school by generously supporting a variety of charities including CAFOD, a local hospice and Nugent Care.
- Pupils embrace opportunities to meet their potential in all aspects of school life and benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities e.g. sports, arts and crafts, and cookery clubs. Through them, they learn the values of commitment, responsibility and teamwork.
- Pupils benefit from participation in away days and retreat activities. All Year 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity to participate actively in residential trips to Tyn-y-Felin. These promote the development of the whole child in a different setting and enable children of different backgrounds and nationalities to work and play together. Year 6 are also involved in retreat days at the local high school. Other year groups have had opportunities to participate in away days for sacramental preparation. All these experiences impact greatly on the pupils' social, spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. They take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. They enjoy earning 'praise points' and associated awards. They are quick to congratulate others on their achievements within class and at whole school assemblies.
- Pupils praise and acknowledge the contribution of others to the life of the school. They show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences.
- This is a very close knit and cohesive community enriched by ethnic diversity. Pupils of all ages show respect and understanding of other faiths and religions. They have enjoyed learning about Judaism and Hinduism within the curriculum and plan to study Islam in the summer term.

How well pupils' achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils' achievement and enjoyment in Religious Education is good.
- On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and they make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good overall. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence of pupils generally attaining appropriate level for their age and stage of development in each key stage. Any underachievement has been identified and strategies are in place to rectify this.
- There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender.
- Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are also good.
- Pupils across the school are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. 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' engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is excellent as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. They work willingly and purposefully on task to complete their work.
- Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. They respect each other's views and talk confidently and maturely about a variety of issues.

How well pupils' respond to and participate in Collective Worship

- Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.
- They show great interest, act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. This was evident in observations and evaluations.
- Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing.
- They become familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the Scriptures.
- They sing joyfully, listen attentively, reflect purposefully and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly more confident in preparing and leading worship from their earliest years. They embrace the opportunity to do so and plan and deliver competently as appropriate to their age and capacity.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education is good.
- It is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make very good progress.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge and deploy a range of teaching and learning styles to motivate and inspire pupils. These include using audio and visual media to enhance the curriculum.
- Teaching encourages pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm of Religious Education because of the variety of tasks given and the efforts made to enable the pupils to achieve and engage with their lessons.
- Assessments made of pupils' achievements generally inform teachers' planning. They take into account pupils' prior learning and most ensure tasks are differentiated

so that the work consolidates, builds and extends their knowledge and understanding.

- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.
- They have high expectations of work, attitude and behaviour in lessons.
- Good use is made of time and resources including other adults and ICT to maximise learning.
- 'Assessment for Learning' strategies are now generally used very effectively across the school. This helps children understand where they need to go next and how best to get there. Pupils are informed of their progress and are given opportunities to discuss their work and how to improve.
- The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is outstanding. Marking is positive and some is developmental. Effort and achievement are celebrated.
- The school has rigorous assessment strategies which provide accurate and detailed information on the achievement of all the pupils. Each topic is assessed against the grade descriptors and pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Teachers are thus able to identify how well pupils are achieving and tackle any underachievement.
- Teachers enable pupils to evaluate their own work and encourage them to remember the key points from topics in 'I Remember' books.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The curriculum is outstanding in meeting pupils' needs.
- 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. Imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils learning.
- The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. Many cross-curricular links are made.
- Enrichment activities such as the eco and gardening club have a positive impact on the curriculum. They show how the children care for each other and look after their environment. Themed weeks such as anti-bullying and anti-racism and disability awareness encourage respect for the views and opinions of others.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral development and vocation.
- During the Olympic Games, the Olympic values programme was followed and the children were encouraged to use the inherent values e.g. determination and respect in their everyday lives.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of groups and individuals. Much support is given to the many children who speak English as a second language. This includes the provision of a teacher who acts as a translator for the children from Eastern Europe who form a large faction of the community. They are thus enabled to fully access the curriculum.
- Circle time and SEAL activities are regularly provided and give the children opportunities to listen to and reflect upon the views of others and to share their own

thoughts and ideas. These sessions help to develop self-esteem and raise aspirations.

- Many visitors are invited into school to enhance the curriculum. These include a rugby player who shared the necessity for self-discipline and a Special Minister of Holy Communion from the parish who explained her role. The parish priest is a regular visitor.
- Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions including Judaism and Hinduism. During the week they spent studying Judaism, they visited a synagogue, and whilst studying Hinduism, a Hindu visitor came to school to share her beliefs and values. These activities help to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. It has a high profile and is central to the life of the school.
- It reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account the variety of faith backgrounds among the pupils.
- 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.
- Staff members are good role models for the children to emulate.
- Children are enabled to pray formally and informally using a variety of prayer methods and styles.
- High quality resources are available to engage pupils e.g. music, artefacts and videos etc. and there are suitable focus areas in each classroom.
- The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship.
- They, in turn, provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship and to evaluate it effectively.
- A meditation group met during Lent and a teaching assistant currently leads a rosary group at lunch times for Year 4 pupils.
- 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 and the Church's liturgical year.

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, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- They show an excellent understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church which is reflected in the Schools own Mission Statement, *'Inspired to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we work, play and pray together'*. All who form part of the school community were involved in its development. The aims and practical objectives emanating from it direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school can evaluate its effectiveness.

- The annual Mission Statement reflection day gives the whole community the chance to revisit its values and sentiments, to reaffirm their commitment to it and to identify ways in which it is lived out.
- There are positive relationships at every level within this cohesive community. Pastoral care is excellent and all members of the community are encouraged to develop and improve.
- Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school. This is evident through themed weeks which often give opportunities for developing their understanding of Catholic social teaching.
- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the school's performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements.
- Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and outlining areas for development and forms the basis of the Self Evaluation Document. This provides evidence of the school's monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. It is accurate and comprehensive and clearly shows vision for the future.
- Following the annual subject audit, an action plan is compiled which feeds into the school development and improvement plan. This is shared with staff and governors and reviewed for impact and effectiveness at the end of each term.
- 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. There is a commitment to encourage all staff members to undertake the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies*.
- A range of opportunities for the spiritual development of staff are provided including the use of 'Come and See for Yourself' sessions at the beginning of each Religious Education theme. Pupils and staff members recently had time to reflect on the Year of Faith and what it meant for them and their school. A set of Stations of the Cross were produced which are now strategically placed around the school building for all to see and think about.
- The quality of Collective Worship is a priority for the school. It is effectively monitored and evaluated. An up to date policy and suitable guidelines for delivery are in place. High quality resources are provided.
- Spiritual and Moral development policies and guidelines are in place.
- Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects the religious diversity within the school.
- Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.
- Parents are consulted annually by questionnaire. Their views and opinions are valued and they are involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. An excellent school website keeps them fully informed about what is happening in school.
- Strong home, school and parish links have been forged. Parents, carers, governors and parishioners are welcomed into school at various times in the liturgical year e.g. at a parish Masses in the school hall.
- Excellent links exist with the parish and the school gives its full support to the Sacramental programme, 'With You Always.'
- The parish priest is very supportive of the school and is the chaplain. He meets regularly with senior leaders to discuss the Catholic life of the school and to plan opportunities for his involvement. As part of the curriculum committee, he is kept well-informed of standards of achievement and monitors tracking of pupils' progress.

- Governors are outstanding in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have effectively helped to shape the direction of the school through challenging leadership to improve standards and provision. They strive to ensure that the Church's mission in education has a high priority in the school. Together, they aspire for academic success whilst ensuring that the children are happy and well-supported in their all-round development.

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.

- Leaders, governors and managers are outstanding in promoting monitoring and evaluating the provision for the Religious Education of the school and in the way they plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils. They set high standards for themselves and all staff members.
- A robust programme for the monitoring and evaluation cycle is in place. Monitoring data is used effectively to evaluate the schools performance and plan for future improvements.
- Teaching and learning are monitored regularly through classroom observations, learning walks and drop-in sessions. Appropriate feedback and support are given as necessary and follow up visits made to ensure that any recommendations have been implemented. Good practice is shared and celebrated.
- A termly scrutiny of work ensures that progression is made across the school and there is a full coverage of the curriculum.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for all. These include in-house provision, commitment to the *Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies* and links with the Warrington schools' network.
- Assessment information is collated and tracked by the subject leader and shared with the leadership team, governors and parents. This enables all concerned to know what standards in Religious Education are like throughout the school and to challenge underachievement and celebrate success as appropriate.
- Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. Moderation and levelling meetings are held regularly and outstanding assessment files are kept for each class. These can be used to develop a school portfolio of assessed work.
- The parish priest is the link governor for Religious Education. He visits regularly and liaises closely with the subject co-ordinator about how he can support the curriculum.
- The subject co-ordinator leads and guides Religious Education very effectively. She shows commitment and introduces new initiatives when appropriate. She has been given quality time to undertake her role and has made very effective use of it. Good documentation guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary. Scrutiny of planning and joint observations of teaching and learning has been undertaken.
- The Self Evaluation Document is rigorous in identifying targets, timescales and lines of accountability. It is appropriately prioritised.
- Curriculum outlines are provided for parents and carers. They are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. Parents are invited into the rejoice assemblies at the end of each topic.
- Achievement and effort are celebrated.

What does the school needs to do to improve further?

- Ensuring the quality of planning consistently meets the needs of pupils by ensuring:
 - tasks are always appropriately differentiated;
 - future plans are informed by assessments.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - continuing to share good practice.
- Continue to implement the areas for development as identified in the school's own self evaluation document. These include:
 - continuing to develop challenge particularly for the more able pupils in all classes;
 - sharing outstanding practice in Collective Worship;
 - continuing to improve the quality of teaching by further developing the use of the '*Come and See*' Programme;
 - continuing to develop communication through the new website;
 - continuing to give the subject leader release time to support colleagues and further develop her monitoring role.

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	2
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	2
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