



## ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. OSWALD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WARRINGTON

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Tuesday 1st December 2009

Inspectors Mrs. Denise Hegarty Mrs. Linda Caswell

URN: 111369

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	208
Chair of Governors	Rev. Fr. C. Canning
School address	Padgate Lane Padgate Warrington Cheshire WA1 3LB
Telephone number	01925 813015
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Date of last inspection	2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2006
Head teacher	Ms. H. Lennon

## 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 Oswald's is an average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Oswald's in the Warrington District of the Archdiocese. The school is growing in size and takes a significant number of pupils from other parishes in the district. It is situated in an area of mainly private housing in the Padgate area of Warrington. There are currently 208 children on roll of whom 182 are baptised Catholic and 23 come from other Christian denominations. There are 3 children who have no faith tradition. The vast majority of children are from a White British heritage. Children arrive in to school with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with national expectations. There are average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Of the 10 teachers at the school, 8 teach Religious Education, 9 are Catholic and 5 teachers in total have a qualification in Religious Education. Two members of staff are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The current head teacher was appointed in 2000 and has led the school through the last two Section 48 inspections. In the absence of the appointed subject co-ordinator, who is currently on maternity leave, Religious Education is co-ordinated by a team leader and two supporting members of staff. The school boasts many national accreditations.

## 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. Oswald's is an outstanding, inclusive, welcoming Catholic school. It is underpinned by a strong Catholic ethos, where a positive climate for work in a stimulating learning environment has been established. There are high expectations throughout the school for work and behaviour and the children respond and flourish accordingly. The school places great emphasis on boosting the self-esteem and self-worth of every child in a culture of open and honest relationships with fair and consistent treatment. The outstanding Mission of the school, underpinned by the gospel values of love, consideration and respect for each other is very evidently lived in every aspect of school life. This has been really apparent in the outstanding relationships that have been established within the school and by working closely with home, the parish, and the wider community. Standards are outstanding. Learners work hard to achieve outstandingly and throughout the school, outstanding progress is made. Overall, teaching and learning, too, are outstanding. The Religious Education curriculum is exceptionally well planned and activities are provided that meet the needs and interests of all the children. There are exemplary, methods of assessment that are rigorously undertaken and provide clear guidance on learning. Learners' behaviour is outstanding – the children strive hard to show friendship and respect to each other. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding as is the provision for learners' spiritual and moral development. Both curriculum Religious Education and Collective Worship make a significant contribution to this development. The subject leader and her team have been outstanding in providing leadership, support and guidance to the staff. All Archdiocesan and national initiatives are securely in place and are closely monitored for impact. The head teacher, senior leaders and governors all show outstanding leadership in developing the Catholic life of the school through the school's Mission Statement. This is evident through their clear understanding of the mission of a Catholic school. Leadership at all levels has a deep awareness of the school's strengths and a vision of how to take the school forward. This is evident in their outstanding self-evaluation processes. The school is outstanding in promoting community cohesion.

**Grade: 1**

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

Outstanding steps have been taken to address the previous areas for development and to keep abreast of all the new initiatives expected of the school since the last Section 48 Inspection in May 2006. Elements of good practice across the school have been identified and shared. Members of staff are encouraged to keep their knowledge and professional development in the subject up to date by attending Topic Days, undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or through in-service training provided by the co-ordinator. Care is taken to ensure that tasks given in Religious Education lessons are differentiated by support, outcome, resource or task and relate closely to the learning objectives. This was evident in planning and during observations. The key words for the topic are displayed in each classroom and are frequently referred to during lessons. Resources have been updated. All documentation has been regularly reviewed. Comprehensive systems for

monitoring and evaluation are securely in place. Outstanding procedures have been implemented for the formal assessment and moderation of work.

## **Grade: 1**

### **Capacity to improve**

The school's self-evaluation document is outstanding and an accurate reflection of where the school is at. It is a comprehensive, working document that is reviewed as part of the school's cycle of self-review. There are outstanding procedures in place for school self evaluation and Religious Education has a significant place in the School Improvement Plans. A collaborative approach to school development has ensured that the leadership and co-ordination of Religious Education has remained strong and prominent despite the absence, due to maternity leave, of the co-ordinator. Given the commitment, enthusiasm and dedication shown by the Head teacher, the present Religious Education Co-ordinator, her team, all other staff members and governors there is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

## **Grade: 1**

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

- Continue to implement any minor areas for development mentioned in this report in the Self-evaluation Document.

## **Achievement and standards**

Learners' attainment on entry to the school is generally about that expected with average numbers of learners having additional needs. Learners make outstanding progress in the school. Achievement and standards in Religious Education overall are outstanding, with the pupils 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 excellent progress in Religious Education with the help provided by additional adult support and differentiated tasks to meet their needs. Children take pride in the presentation of their work and it is recorded in a variety of different ways. The school checks on the progress made by all through rigorous assessment procedures and some challenging marking.

Throughout the school, learners were confident in discussion and demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. They displayed great enthusiasm for their school and towards their work. Scrutiny of the formal assessments has ensured that teachers have a good understanding and awareness of the levels of attainment in Religious Education and has enabled them to plan very effectively. Moderation of the levels should be undertaken collectively by members of staff to ensure further consistency across the school. The behaviour of children throughout the school is outstanding. They have an excellent sense of right and wrong and work well together showing collaboration, co-operation and mutual respect.

Members of staff take care to affirm, praise and celebrate good work and behaviour and this leads to a positive climate for learning. The children make an outstanding contribution to the school in their work as school councillors, helping the elderly in the community etc. They enjoy fundraising activities and events and feel valued members of the community. Together with parents, they speak proudly of their school and all it does for them and their families.

**Grade: 1**

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

### **Teaching and learning**

Overall the quality of provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching on the day of inspection was good on the whole with many outstanding elements. The learning needs of all children are addressed through the use of many creative teaching and learning strategies, differentiation of tasks and by excellent additional support from experienced teaching assistants. Children with additional learning needs are quickly identified and intervention strategies are put in place to support them. There is also a strong body of parental volunteers who also provide support in school. From reception to the end of Key Stage 2, more able children are challenged by probing questioning and suitably differentiated tasks. Teachers and learners are enthusiastic in their work and this leads to a happy working environment where success is acknowledged and celebrated.

Planning is well monitored and is outstanding as teachers use the driver words from the Levels of Attainment to focus questions, tasks etc. at the appropriate levels of ability for the children. Great care is taken to provide the children with material that is suitable and engaging and consequently learners are motivated to learn and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. In most lessons observed, they remained enthusiastically on task throughout the whole lesson and willingly participated in completing their work. Most lessons observed had good pace and timing, which aided concentration; kept children focussed and enabled them to complete their work efficiently. Children are enabled to work both independently and collaboratively and cross curricular links are frequently made. Presentation of work was generally of a high standard indicating that the children take a pride in what they do in Religious Education. Teachers ensure that learners understand the purpose of the lesson by sharing the learning objective at the start. This is then often re-visited during the plenary session. The key words are frequently introduced and reiterated during the lesson thus enabling the children to assimilate them into their religious vocabulary. There are also many vibrant, interactive displays being built up as the topic progresses to enhance the learning environment and provide a point of reference for the children. In their interview, the children in Year Six spoke confidently, enthusiastically and openly about all the topics covered this year and were able to relate their life experience to the Christian understanding of the topics.

Some very good use is being made of Information Communications Technology to engage the children. This should be encouraged and this good

practice shared. Assessment of learners' work is outstanding and exemplary. Records are kept and this information should continue to inform future planning. Parents and carers are encouraged and enabled to become involved in their children's Religious Education in an outstanding way through the provision of termly newsletters and by the regular opportunities the school provides for them to view their children's work during 'Sharing Time.' They are encouraged to attend 'Star of the Week' assemblies where good work, behaviour etc. is shared and celebrated with them. Reports sent home concerning the children's achievement and progress are informative as the language of the level descriptors and the topic expectations are used consistently.

**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 outstanding practice fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. The leadership of the school ensures suitable positioning of Religious Education on timetables. The school reaches out to the local and wider communities through support and charity work. Overall the Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to learners' spiritual and moral development which is further strengthened through the use of the class rules and their involvement with charities etc. Positive relationships are embedded into the culture of the school and reinforce Christian attitudes and behaviour. The children are encouraged to reflect on their learning at the end of each topic.

**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 celebrating achievement and raising standards. The Religious Education Co-ordinator provides outstanding and enthusiastic leadership in the subject. Together with her team, she supports staff members and has shared all recent initiatives with them. Very good, up to date, documentation guides and directs all staff in their delivery of the subject. Co-ordinators' meetings have been attended regularly and information is disseminated to all staff during staff meetings or in-service time. Performance in Religious education is monitored in an outstanding way. Monitoring and evaluation of planning, workbooks,

teaching and learning and formal assessments have been rigorously undertaken. Great guidance is given to staff members beforehand as to what will be monitored and how it will be undertaken. Feed back is given afterwards on any areas for development identified and the good work that goes on is celebrated and shared. Self-assessment is undertaken for each topic by staff and learners.

St. Oswald's is socially inclusive by providing equality of access and of opportunity for all learners to make progress. This practice is outstanding. Members of staff are encouraged to continue their professional development by keeping abreast of the times and updating their subject knowledge. Of the 10 teachers at the school, 8 teach Religious Education, 9 are Catholic and 5 teachers in total have a qualification in Religious Education. Two members of staff are currently undertaking the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. All have opportunity to attend topic days provided by the Archdiocese. The budget for Religious Education is good and is at least on par with other core subjects. This has enabled some excellent resources to be purchased recently and these have been deployed outstandingly to raise standards and to enhance learning. Good use is being made of Information and Communications Technology.

The governors are regular visitors to the school and are kept further informed on matters relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school through the Head Teacher's termly reports, in their capacity as class governors and through school newspapers which are sent on to them. They are involved in the self evaluation process, share responsibility for shaping the direction of the school and thus discharge their responsibilities outstandingly. A new part of the school building has been dedicated to a very loyal, long-standing governor.

**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. The teachings of Jesus are truly followed by the school community as evident in the way they show care, consideration and mutual respect for all members. This is a welcoming, Christian community committed to achieving and celebrating success for all of its members. The Mission Statement is the driving force of everything that happens in the school. It is a shared expression of what the school is about and is embraced by the community. Its message is promoted at every given opportunity e.g. in the Reception parents' induction programme. It informs all school policies and plans and is displayed throughout the school. There are clear aims which highlight the philosophy of education in this Catholic school and these are supported by practical objectives which show how it is lived out in the daily life of the school. The children should now be given the opportunity to compile their own version of the Mission Statement so they, too, can have full ownership of it and live it out. Relationships within the school are excellent. Children receive wonderful support and guidance. Class rules guide them, in a positive way, to appropriate Christian behaviour.

Across the school, there is a clear sense of mission in reaching out to those less fortunate. Learners support a variety of local, national and international charities both by becoming better informed and by raising funds and resources. At weekly assemblies, good work, behaviour and attitudes are rewarded and celebrated. Since the last inspection, the Mission Statement has been reviewed regularly allowing the governors and staff to monitor the Catholic life of the school very effectively.

**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 or key stage. Throughout the year Collective Worship provides a variety of experiences for pupils. This fulfils government and Archdiocesan guidance. Formal and informal monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship have taken place and good practice has been shared. An audit has been undertaken and steps put in place to address any areas that needed improving. A comprehensive policy that states the nature and purpose of Collective Worship has been produced and guidelines that support its planning and delivery have also been provided for staff and for children.

Teachers receive clear guidance from the Religious Education Co-ordination team and then plan and deliver their own Collective Worship using the format provided by the Archdiocese. They ensure time is given to individual reflection and enable all pupils to be active participants. Children are prayerful, respectful and reflective during Collective Worship and willingly share their thoughts, ideas, opinions and views. As they get older, they are encouraged and enabled to lead Collective Worship, and do so well. Teachers could take the opportunity to enhance such Acts of Worship by reiterating the key points, where necessary, and perhaps drawing the celebration to a fitting conclusion. Each classroom has a suitable focal area and good use is made of music and resources to enhance the delivery.

Parents, carers and governors of the school are invited to participate in assemblies and services. Masses are held on rota basis in the Church and classes come together to celebrate with the parish community. Collective Worship makes an outstanding contribution to spiritual and moral development. It stimulates reflection on spiritual and moral issues and on personal beliefs.

**Grade: 1**

## **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 and success for all. Collective Worship celebrates, reflects and respects the



diversity of belief within the community. The children participate in many services and liturgies which involve the community e.g. Harvest Festival, Easter and Holy Week Services. 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 Sikhism. There are links forged with businesses, other educational establishments and with the local and wider community.

Parents and carers are invited to celebrations, receive weekly newsletters and are often encouraged to volunteer their services to enhance provision. They are regularly consulted on a variety of school issues and invited to feedback their views. Parents feel welcome in school and enjoy many opportunities to share activities and events that take place. They appreciate the information the school shares with them concerning their children's Religious Education. The school operates a weekly 'sharing time' for parents to visit the school and spend quality time exploring their children's work with them. Parents, thus, have further insight into the work their children are involved in. The parish priest and governors are regular visitors to the school. The school works closely with the parish on the Sacramental Preparation programme and with parents on Education for Personal Relationships programmes. Concern is shown for the well being of those less fortunate than themselves in the way the school community support local, national and global charities e.g. in their donations to the Good Shepherd fund for Nugent Care and in compiling harvest gifts for the community. The school provides the children with many extra curricular experiences.

**Grade: 1**

